THE Howling Mob

An INDICTMENT of DEMOCRACY

by

"A Gentleman with a Duster"

"FREE as we stand from some of the darkest superstitions of the past," says the author of "The Mirrors of Downing Street," "it is plain enough, in the disorders and perplexities of the modern world, that we are still the victims of illusion."

¶ To this iconoclast—for it is his forte to break the images from which he has removed the cobwebs—Democracy is a false god, a bureaucratic monster which threatens to make Frankensteins of us all.

¶ First, he shows up this automaton as seen by him, then proceeds to leave it without a leg to stand on. Both exposition and analysis furnish entertainment as well as food for thought. Democracy, if the picture is correct, is a bully; a half-baked futile tyrant; unalterably opposed to exceptional ability of any kind, to genuine idealism.

¶ It has been claimed that Great Britain enjoys greater liberty than America. If this is true, the thinking citizen of this presumably free country will wish to check up on the argument that popular government will end by robbing him of his liberty, just as Leninism has destroyed free speech and the sanctity of the home for the driven millions of Russia.

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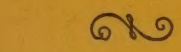

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BY

A GENTLEMAN WITH A DUSTER

"In politics, what begins in fear
usually ends in folly."
S. T. COLERIDGE

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PREFACE

History is a tale in which we read of man's effort to escape from the bewitchments and entanglements of illusion.

The superstitions of the past, so real to him, seem to us now like those evil enchantments cast by a witch over the hero of a fairy-story, blinding him to the truth of his circumstances, and absorbing his mind in matters which have no reality outside the mists and fevers of phantasy. We find ourselves amazed that he can be so doltish as to permit such incredible and penalising ideas to rule his life. We fidget as we read, and grow impatient for the time when, like a true hero, he will awake from his nightmare, throw off the spells that bind him, and seize the obvious happiness prepared for those who walk in the light of intelligence.

How costly these illusions have been to humanity we may see by counting the days which separate Hippocrates from Lister, and considering how different now had been the fortunes of humanity if no waste desert of two thousand years had intervened between the questions of Aristotle and the answers of Newton.

Unhappily for the progress of this fairy-tale, no sooner does man break free from the im-

prisonment of one illusion than he straightway incarcerates himself in another. And worse still, it would seem that the more triumphantly an age blows its own trumpet, and the more truculently it asseverates its superiority over all past ages, the less is it capable of perceiving that its progress is only from one folly to another, perhaps even from the frying-pan into the fire.

At the present time, free as we stand from some of the darkest superstitions of the past, and far as we have advanced from the more cruel and savage habits of former ignorances, it is plain enough, in the disorders and perplexities of the modern world, that we are still victims of illusion, and no nearer to the realities of our place in nature than those whose cruder superstitions amaze or amuse us as we read about them in the earliest pages of history.

There is this added penalty to our condition, that even a slight error in a civilisation so complex as ours, and in a generation so numerous as the present, may cause infinitely more mischief than the grossest of past errors, when each tribe or nation followed its own ways, and the population of the whole world was less than that of modern London. A clumsy wheel in the chariot of Cæsar was no grave danger, but a fractional error in the plane of a flying-machine is fatal to the airman.

It is, then, of great importance that we

should sometimes stand aside from the march of events and endeavour quietly to regard the movement of our time, with the purpose of discovering any error in the mind of public opinion which may be dangerous to the true and abiding interests of the human race. Are we, like our ancestors, the victims of illusion, and are any of our beliefs no better than superstitions? Fifty years hence what will men say of us? and shall we cut a more respectable figure in the eyes of our posterity than the generations of past ages cut in ours?

From this angle of contemplation I invite the reader to consider the popular superstition that Democracy, as we now understand the term, is a rational form of government, and to decide within himself, after he has carefully and honestly contemplated the multitudinous consequences of this political superstition as they appear over the whole field of human existence, whether there is not here an explanation of many and perhaps the chief mischiefs and distresses which at present afflict us so disastrously.

A wise man who becomes conscious in his body of persistent pain, never mind how often he has hitherto ridiculed the health faddist and pitied the self-inflicted miseries of the valetudinarian, will consult a physician. He will recognise that no amount of cheerful optimism and no amount of auto-suggestion can now help him, and he will acknowledge, however firm his former faith in the curative virtues

of temperance and exercise, that there are desperate instances in which only the surgeon can save a body from destruction.

In the same way a great and vigorous nation, scornful of lesser people absorbed in factional revolutions and for ever wasting their time over theories of government, will seriously attend to its own political machinery when it finds itself overtaken again and again, even to the point of exhaustion and collapse, by disorder and disgrace.

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THE HOWLING MOB

As it seems to me, the wise and good in every country will, in all likelihood, become every day more and more disgusted with the representative form of government.

You see how this House of Commons has begun to verify all the ill prophecies that were made of it—low, vulgar, meddling with everything, assuming universal competency, flattering every base passion, and sneering at everything noble, refined, and truly national.

The multitude . . . are always under the domination of some one feeling or view; whereas truth, and above all, practical wisdom, must be the result of a wide comprehension of the more and the less, the balance and the counterbalance.

S. T. Coleridge.

THE HOWLING MOB

CHAPTER I

THE CONDITIONS OF DEMOCRACY

Abraham Lincoln, of whom it has been said that "he stripped every question of its political and economic aspects, laying bare its moral character," was careful to warn the American people that the theory of Democracy implies a moral, intelligent, and patriotic electorate.

He saw clearly that this new theory of government could not conceivably function unless the people who adopted it conscientiously considered their political problems, and took a large, unsectional, and moral view of every question brought to them for judgment.

Gladstone was of the same mind, and in memorable words solemnly adjured the working classes of the British Islands to make an unselfish use of their political power, lest it should fall from their hands, even as it had fallen from the hands of King, Church, and Aristocracy.

At its birth, this new and idealistic theory of government, so contrary to the experience and

common sense of mankind, rested absolutely on the assumption that a people called upon to govern itself would exercise its political powers with serious intelligence, with a profound sense of its moral responsibility, and with the unifying affection of a disinterested patriotism.

Later, when Democracy had failed to solve the greatest of its social and economic evils, and when every extension of the franchise had been followed by fresh confusion and new disappointments, political philosophers shifted their ground and maintained that Democracy was a goal, not a conjuring trick, and that the ragged regiments of reform must expect to undergo privation and hardship, perhaps even suffering and martyrdom, before they reached the far-off, invisible, and problematical Promised Land of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

The note of moral enthusiasm and the burning spirit of humaneness which we find in the earlier writings of John Morley deceived many, and led a number of earnest young men in the middle classes to cultivate an æsthetic Liberalism which affected their intonation and even the expression of their faces, but did not warm their hearts nor strengthen their intelligence.

To this school of advanced political thought there was something vulgar and distasteful in patriotism; they shrank from anything robust, and shivered at the sound of anything much louder than a simper. If a poor man expressed pride in his country, he was apt to forget the

wrongs from which, in the opinion of these apostles, he unquestionably suffered; and if in a moment of intemperate indignation he professed his willingness to withstand a foreign nation which had insulted his flag or stolen one of his markets, he disturbed the academic atmosphere of political theorising in which alone these apostles could breathe with evenness and self-assurance.

Therefore, instead of the unifying affection of a disinterested patriotism, Democracy was urged to hold itself together as a solid body by cultivating the exquisite aspiration of Internationalism. This was to be the great ether of cohesion in the modern state. Wonderful reforms were promised at home—the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, Home Rule for Ireland, Local Government, and various alterations in the Poor Law; but abroad the prospect was even more inspiring; the nations were to be united in the sacred bonds of Free Trade, there was to be no rivalry save that of commerce, no more secret diplomacy, no more cruel wars. The apostles of Democracy were to build up a fabric as splendid as that of the Catholic Church, namely, the United States of Europe, the Federation of the World, the Parliament of Man.

It is important to observe that one of the very earliest manifestations of Democracy was an aversion from love of country, and an almost religious horror of anything which savoured of Imperialism. The Victorian

philosophers of Liberalism shuddered at the masculine tones of patriotism, and trembled at the thought of how great a provocation to the poor foreigners was the majestic splendour of the British Empire.

These gentle and impractical spirits were the first-fruits of Democracy. They were followed by men with harder heads, narrower intelligence, and coarser outlook, the political adventurers of modern times. To the pretensions and ambitious cupidity of these men a select and responsible jury of the nation was fatal: popularity, power, and security, lay in the widest possible extension of the franchise. Therefore they made it one of the immediate battles of Democracy that the vote should be given even to the most ignorant and degraded elements in the nation, addressing themselves with flattery to the multitude and with threats of one kind or another to the established powers. They were profuse in their promises, indignant with sympathy for the sufferings of the poor, and even more scornful of patriotism and Imperialism than their predecessors. With a duped mob at their back these advanced democrats won their way to power, but did little to bring in the millennium and much to derange the structure of our national life. Not until they were threatened by the men who have now overwhelmed them did they lay their hands to matters which really touch the life of the working classes.

At the present time the popularity and power which these advanced Radicals enjoyed for a certain period has passed into the hands of a well-organised and well-disciplined political force which calls itself Labour. No longer are the working classes to be exploited. No longer are the suffering masses to be bamboozled by the dilettanti of Liberalism and the hypocrites of Radicalism. They are to be officered out of their own ranks, and led to victory by comrades long drilled in the practical politics and iron discipline of the trades unions. Working men will lead working men, with a few well-chosen working women to help them, and in the near future there shall be no more slums, no more poverty, very few diseases, and little or no vice.

But already these authentic leaders of Democracy are challenged by bolder spirits. The name of Mazzini, who said, "The true instrument of the progress of the people is to be sought in the moral factor," is fast becoming as old-fashioned as the names of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham. William Morris is no longer an authority, and John Ruskin has only an attenuated cloistral following that now never dares to lift its gentle voice above the strident cries of democratic factions. No; the times have changed since Abraham Lincoln stated the conditions of Democracy, and the name above all other names to these latest disciples of that gospel is the name of Lenin. As for the policy of the Independent Labour Party, which alarms so many moderate

people, it is denounced by these apostles of Communism as no better than mere capitalistic Toryism. The middle classes are not to be converted, but to be shot down as enemies of the proletariat; the British Empire is to be torn into pieces by the Red Armies of Russia; the ballot-box is to be abolished and the tyranny of the Communist official is to take the place not only of the responsible Minister but of the manufacturer, the merchant, the banker, and the tradesman.

At the moment, organised Labour is contemptuous of Communism, and occasionally summons up courage to twit it with living on Soviet gold; but, let us not forget, it is only the other day that Liberalism, now a broken and mutinous remnant, was contemptuous of Labour, and denounced it as a sectional faction attempting to usurp the powers of a national party. Moreover, the advanced spirits of Labour do at this present time embrace some of the deadly doctrines of Communism, while many of its rank and file openly profess themselves dissatisfied with the temporising policy of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

There can be no doubt from a dispassionate study of the history of the last hundred years that the whole movement of Democracy is away from the moral and responsible individualism of its earliest statesmen. Whatever course it may take in the next decade or so, and however sincerely its leaders may desire a better

world, one thing at least is certain, that the original conditions no longer occupy serious attention, and that the future of the English race and the destinies of the British Empire are henceforth to be decided by the votes of the ignorant and the irresponsible, or, failing that, by brute force.

A nation in which a mountebank so indifferent to economic truth and so frankly an apostle of Russian Communism as Mr. A. J. Cook can exercise power over a million working men, hamstring its whole industrial life, and cause, at a time of perilous distress, a loss in revenue measured by hundreds of millions of pounds, is clearly not walking in the way of common sense. Something must be wrong with us. Some false theory of Democracy must have crept into our political thinking. It is manifestly time that we attempted to recover our good sense, and to exercise those powers of clear thinking and heroic action for which our fathers were not unjustly famous.

CHAPTER II

BRUTE FORCE

Plutarch tells us that when someone advised Lycurgus to set up a democracy in Sparta, the Lacedæmonian made answer, "Pray do you first set up a democracy in your own house."

Carlyle put the matter in a more picturesque figure. "Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may vote this and that, above decks and below, in the most harmonious exquisitely constitutional manner: the ship, to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for, and fixed with adamantine rigour by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote. If you can, by voting or without voting, ascertain these conditions, and valiantly conform to them, you will get round the Cape: if you cannot,—the ruffian Winds will blow you ever back again; the inexorable Icebergs, dumb privy-councillors from Chaos, will nudge you with most chaotic 'admonition'; you will be flung half-frozen on the Patagonian cliffs, or admonished into shivers by your iceberg councillors, and sent sheer down to Davy Jones, and will never get round Cape Horn at all!"

He continues: "Unanimity on board ship; yes indeed, the ship's crew may be very unanimous, which doubtless, for the time being, will be very comfortable to the ship's crew, and to their Phantasm Captain if they have one: but if the tack they unanimously steer upon is guiding them into the belly of the Abyss, it will not profit them much! Ships accordingly do not use the ballot-box at all; and they reject the Phantasm species of Captains. . . .

"If a man," he says, "could shake out of his mind the universal noise of political doctors in this generation and in the last generation or two, and consider the matter face to face, with his own sincere intelligence looking at it, I venture to say he would find this a very extraordinary method of navigating, whether in the Straits of Magellan or the undiscovered Sea of Time."

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. J. H. Thomas are occasionally passengers on board a ship, and on no occasion has either of them been known to organise the crew into a democracy. They go upon these pleasant holidays, seeking sunshine and idleness, with their political propaganda in their pockets, and one is sure that they are as polite and charming to the captain of the ship as the other passengers, never questioning his authority, accepting the hospitality of his table with a becoming modesty, and never once suggesting, even as theorists, that his decisions should be

put to the vote of deck hands, stokers, and engine-room artificers.

It is perfectly certain, I think, that both of them would entirely agree with Carlyle that a ballot-box on board ship is an unthinkable absurdity, an absurdity so gross and palpable that Mr. A. J. Cook might almost reject it. Nor is it probable, even with their feet solidly planted on the terra firma of their native land, that they would disagree with Lycurgus in his notion that no house could well be managed on the democratic principle. If challenged in their own homes by the cook, the parlourmaid, and the boot-boy to admit them into the family counsels, they would assuredly adopt a firm attitude of old-fashioned individualism and see to it from that moment that the key of the store-cupboard was put in a safer place than usual.

There is indeed no champion of the democratic principle who applies it to matters which most closely touch his life or affect his pocket. Some of the trades-union officials who are for ever demanding an uneconomic wage from overtaxed employers struggling to compete with less hampered foreign rivals, pay their own clerks and underlings the scantiest possible wages, and are strongly averse from those underlings organising themselves to demand shorter hours and higher pay. All their glowing sympathy with the working man is for the working man employed by someone else, and all their boundless charity for this

working man is at the expense of other people.

Never to my knowledge has any member of a trade union, or any fiery prophet of Communism, refused to accept the hospitalities of our hospitals and the free service of our great surgeons, although it is common knowledge that hospital nurses are by far the worst paid and by far the hardest-worked people in the whole nation.

No criticism of Democracy is so obvious or so telling as the homely criticism of Lycurgus and Carlyle. We see at once, everyone sees, that no household could conduct its business as we are attempting to conduct our national business, and that no ship could safely take the sea under the form of governance which we employ for administering the affairs of the state. Yet, for some reason never clearly formulated, the mass of the nation accepts the idea that what is so obviously grotesque and lunatic for the home or for the ship at sea is wise and salutary for the body politic.

This continuing faith in the efficacy of the democratic principle is probably a vestigial survival of the moral enthusiasm which first brought it to birth. And if every voter in a nation took an intelligent, ethical, and patriotic interest in politics, listening to those who come before him seeking his suffrage with the same earnest and dispassionate desire to arrive at truth which characterises a legal jury, it is still true that out of the battle of policies true

leaders might emerge, veritable captains of the national destinies, capable of safeguarding the spiritual values of civilisation and deepening the national happiness of the multitude. But experience has shown that every extension of the suffrage in the nation has led to a diminution of disinterested patriotism and to an increase of sectional selfishness, while the quality of those who aspire to national leadership has fallen to a level of dangerous unintelligence.

The one rational justification for Democracy which passes current in these days among men of understanding is that which Lowell adopted as an answer to the onslaught of Carlyle. The ideal is to be found "hereafter," when the state shall "at length" sum up and exemplify in itself "all those qualities of the Hero which poets were forced to imagine and typify because they could not find them in the actual world."

The instrument which is to give us *in futuro* this perfect state is education. Educate the masses, and they will no longer be the sport of charlatans and fanatics; educate them, and they will hereafter choose for leaders men endowed with the divine gifts of sweetness and light; educate them, and the nation itself will be at length orderly, virtuous, intelligent, and heroic.

It is plain, however, that this justification for Democracy sins against one of the simplest truths of human experience; it is a positive and most ludicrous instance of putting the cart before the horse. Everything precious and

essential in the life of a nation is to lie in peril of ignorance and brutality until *at length* ignorance has been abolished by the schoolmaster, and until *hereafter* brutality has dropped its cudgel at the door of culture. We are not to educate and prepare the multitude for the responsible exercise of power, but at once to entrust power to that multitude in the hope that it may hereafter exercise it for ends which now move only the most enlightened of mankind.

"Half a century ago," says Carlyle, "and down from Father Adam's time till then, the Universe, wherever I could hear tell of it, was wont to be of a somewhat abstruse nature; by no means carrying its secret written on its face, legible to every passer-by; on the contrary, obstinately hiding its secret from all foolish, slavish, wicked, insincere persons, and partially disclosing it to the wise and noble-minded alone, whose number was not the majority in my time."

Matthew Arnold, who deplored the ignorance and brutality of the masses with real sincerity, and also with a true compassion, believed with many other apostles of the democratic principle that education could save us from the worst perils of that political experiment. He saw in the inequality of men's minds a sterner danger to national navigation than the inequality of their fortunes. Inequality, he says, has the natural and necessary effect of "materialising our upper class, vulgarising

our middle class, and brutalising our lower class." We have no vital sense that to the building-up of human life certain powers are essential—" the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners."

Education was to give us these good things and to save us from the hideous chaos of a brutalised Democracy; but when he contemplated the comfortable opulence of the middle class, who have long enjoyed the instruction of the schoolmaster, he cried out with disgust, " Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds. . . ."

In order to elevate the middle classes he advocated state schools for their children. " By giving to schools for these classes a public character, it can bring the instruction in them under a criticism which the stock of knowledge and judgment in our middle classes is not of itself at present able to supply."

But beyond even state schools and an improved system of education, there is, he taught us, and taught us truly, the necessity for culture, that is to say, a desire for perfection. Until this desire is general to the community he saw that the state of a democratic nation must be materialistic and perilous. We are

not only to educate the masses in the elements of learning, but to bend all our energies to the enlightenment of the entire electorate in the one great saving truth of human existence, namely that " it is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. . . . Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it."

Now, this faith in the power of education to elevate mankind and to safeguard the destinies of democratic nations is founded upon a fallacy more visible to us, after nearly sixty years of public education, than to those who first propounded it.

Those early missionaries of education acted as if all men are capable of being educated. They acted as if in every son of man there is lying dormant a thirst for learning and a capacity for receiving knowledge. It was as if we should say that every boy now at school is a potential Plato, Michelangelo, Nelson, Pasteur, or Cecil Rhodes; and that every girl now stumbling through the five-finger exercise or learning to mix colours on a palette has it in her power to become a Madame Schumann or a Rosa Bonheur.

We know now that the vast majority of men stubbornly oppose themselves to learning, and have in their minds no capacity at all for the knowledge which is recognised by culture.

This is true not only concerning the son of the working man, but concerning the son of the merchant and the nobleman. Immense sums of money are wasted every generation by the leisured classes in attempting to educate those who are wholly incapable of being educated, and the only benefit which those parents receive, in the great majority of cases, for the money they spend in attempting to educate their sons, is the traditional spirit of decency, restraint, and fair play which the public school and the university breed in the youth under their care.

In spite of all the money spent publicly and privately on education, the intelligent workman is a minority, the intelligent tradesman is a minority, the intelligent gentleman is a minority, and in every class of the community unintelligence is a great and overwhelming majority.

Nothing, perhaps, shows more vividly the blinding power of democratic idealism than the notion which once captured the minds of so many good and great men, that education can give us the perfect citizen and the righteous state. It has given us instead the political democrat who believes that education can be used to produce mental uniformity. It has given us a half-educated demagogue who would have all men half-educated, and who believes that the schoolmaster can be used to achieve his idea of a low equality. He too believes in education, but an education which deals with

men in a wholesale fashion and makes no distinction between mind and mind. He cannot accept anything in the nature of individualism, he is antipathetic to superiority or to the very idea of exceptional qualities, and as for excellence in the individual he regards it as the enemy of fraternal and comfortable mediocrity. Men, in his view, are always a mass, and on the horizon of his fondest hopes he sees the establishment of a standard to which the lowest shall be able to reach and from which the highest, brought down to that point by the rough hand of democratic equality, shall never be allowed to depart.

Lenin looked forward to a time when "the intellectual gentry," as he called men of real education, would be put under the control of "armed workmen."

It is one of the most curious incidents in the lunacy of the democratic principle that liberty, its own mother, should so soon become the chief object of its hatred. Less than a hundred years ago there was no word which lent itself more eloquently to the lyrics of revolutionary poets and the perorations of flatulent demagogues than this noble word of liberty, and a study of the real literature of democracy reveals to us that even the most cultivated and responsible of its philosophers were carried away by the prospect which this great word opened up to their enraptured vision.

But liberty belongs to individualism, and the

democratic principle, having brought Socialism into existence, which was inevitable, cannot therefore regard liberty as a virtue. Like thrift, which once had no serious critics, but which now is impugned on all hands as an anti-social vice, liberty has become an evil to be extirpated by those who march to the perfect state. The fathers of these men looked with angry eyes on the discipline of the barrack-square; but a sterner discipline even than that of the soldier is now the ideal of the forward spirits of Democracy. The very thoughts of men are to be ordered by the state, and any opposition to the tyrant state is to be crushed with the iron hand of a Tsarist despotism. The leaders of the Labour Party advanced boldly from the individualism of the Liberals and the liberty of the Radicals; but the Communists are advancing more boldly still from the restricted individualism and the qualified liberty of Labour. The latest evolution of the democratic principle is the courageous state tyranny of Leninism, and sooner or later the leaders of British labour will be obliged to move in that dark and terrible direction.

"I am afraid of liberalism," wrote Samuel Butler in 1893—"or at any rate of the people who call themselves liberal; they flirt with radicals who flirt with socialists who flirt with anarchists who do something a deal more than flirt with dynamite."

Liberty of any kind is plainly incompatible with state tyranny, and individualism can no more co-exist with state socialism than an eagle

in a cage can fly to the mountains. The more vigorous a Democracy becomes, the more immorally does it make use of force to attain its ends. "I have heard," said Coleridge, "but two arguments of any weight adduced in favour of passing this Reform Bill, and they are in substance these: 1. We will blow your brains out if you don't pass it. 2. We will drag you through a horsepond if you don't pass it; and there is a good deal of force in both."

CHAPTER III

STANDARDS

It is one of the political penalties of Democracy that the attention of the human mind should be kept almost continually to the basement and offices of the house of life, and seldom be allowed the freedom of mounting to its more gracious living-rooms.

But in this place, before we consider the increasing menace of Democracy to our economic welfare, we will reflect upon the grave damage it has already inflicted upon our spiritual life, reminding ourselves that when enlightened men look backward in time it is not to inquire who was Lord Mayor or Master Cutler in such a year, or to pore over such evidence as exists concerning the imports and exports of such an age, but rather to enrich their minds, stimulate their imaginations, and educate their affections with the art and letters of their ancestors.

Now, it is an indisputable truth that before the reign of Demos there was nothing unlovely or commonplace in the whole realm of England. The physical loveliness which inspired some of Shakespeare's sweetest and most haunting words was so sacred a thing

in the eyes of landowners and builders that they could no more contemplate its disfigurement by a base architecture than they could dream of using their own waistcoats or leather aprons to advertise a quack medicine. Whether it was a castle, a manor-house, a church, or a cottage that was to be built in England's green and pleasant land, the taste never erred from the right and the beautiful; and whether it was erected by town labour or country labour, the workmanship was ever of the highest and most honest order. There was no peasant in the country in those days, however unlettered in his mind and indigent in his circumstances, whose garden did not also beautifully attest a perfect taste. And it was this same authentic Englishman, stubbornly living his traditional life into the age of Democracy, who by the flower-beds in front of his thatched cottage recalled the vulgarians of Victorian prosperity from the monstrous hideousness of carpet bedding to the natural loveliness of the herbaceous border.

The reader will find confirmation of this aspect of eighteenth-century England in Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's admirable *History of England,* and Mr. Trevelyan is not a Tory, holds to the democratic principle, and believes that England can survive the perilous experiment of popular government.

After reminding people who think everything progressive dates from the Reform Bill of 1832 that "humanitarianism was one

eighteenth-century product," and giving his reader charming glimpses of such country gentlemen as Sir Roger de Coverley and such parish priests as Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, this democratic historian, a descendant of Whig aristocracy, confesses that "Society on the eve of the Industrial Revolution had many features most attractive to us in retrospect: a rural population attached to the land and its labours and recreations, to the village and its traditions; great variety and independence of type and character among men; individual training, skill, and taste in arts and crafts as a normal part of the economic life of the people."[1]

Nothing unlovely or base from one end of England to the other, before the reign of Democracy! It is worth a man's while to keep that truth in his thoughts while he travels through the England of the present time. How difficult to find a piece of architecture later than 1850 which is not either repulsively soulless or else distressingly self-conscious. How often a whole stretch of beautiful country has been ruined by the tawdriness of the jerry-builder or the pretentiousness of a vulgar architect. Even the sea-going Downs have been invaded by the red bricks and asbestos tiles of villadom; while the modern extension of every once lovely fishing-village on the coast has obscured its original character and destroyed its ancient charm.

[1] *History of England*, p. 528.

The point for us to observe in this matter is that those who thus disfigure the rural loveliness of England and villainously ruin her villages and country towns, do not know that they are mutilators and assassins, but rather unquestionably believe that they are adding to her beauty. There is no jerry-builder who says, "I will erect twenty detestable cottages," or "I will knock up a street of villas more disgusting to the eye than any that now exist": on the contrary, every assassin of the beauty of England believes that his architecture will find purchasers on account of its "prettiness"; and he does indeed sacrifice no small part of his profits to elegances and adornments which are even more disgusting to taste than the form and materials of his building.

Our ancestors hardly knew that they were building beautifully; our contemporaries do not know that they are building hideously. It was as natural and inevitable for our ancestors to build rightly and fittingly as it is for our contemporaries to build wrongly and murderously. Here, as elsewhere, we shall find that the main damage of Democracy to the spiritual life of mankind lies in the lowering of standards. Our ancestors respected the achievements of the past and cherished in their minds an idea of excellence at which they aimed. Our contemporaries, living under no spiritual authority, and entertaining no reverence whatever for the past, exclaim that they will build as they like, that a man is not a man who slavishly copies the work of others,

and they declare, as I have often heard them, that a hundred years hence men will look back to their villadoms with the same admiration that we now profess to feel for the architecture of the eighteenth century.

There is no doubt, I am quite certain, that the vast masses of this country can see no vital differences between the houses built by Adam and the houses of the last fifty years, and without question would decide that for brightening the countryside and enlivening a smart suburb the later houses are by far the better of the two styles.

This wholesale disfigurement of a most beautiful country raises scarcely a protest in the public mind, and the serious intellects in the House of Commons are far more concerned in attempting to settle the wages of colliers and stevedores than in preserving the sweetness and graciousness of their native land from abominable destruction. Indeed they regard anything in the nature of economics as a real and solemn matter for political energy, while anything in so questionable a region as æsthetics appears to them a matter for superior smiles and official condescension. Yet it is very certain that fifty years hence no one in the world will be bothering his head with the wages now paid to miners and stevedores, while no man of education will ever visit the British Islands again without wrath and indignation in his heart for the wholesale

destruction of beauty permitted by our democratic Government.

Politicians are always the blindest and stupidest of men, and sometimes even the most corrupt. They have their ears to the ground, and, if they happen to be in power, are immediately thrown into a tremble (as I have often seen even the greatest of them) at any rumbling of discontent from the multitude. What will gain them popular favour, what will bring them votes, what will maintain them in power or enable them to drive their opponents from power, that, and that alone, is considered practical politics.

Yet a little quiet thinking might convince even the most ignorant and timid of these time-servers, most of whom are shamelessly the pimps and panders of the ignorant and the degraded, that æsthetics have a practical value even for politicians. For there is no doubt that most of the bitterness and discontent of the multitude have their rise in the melancholy of slums, the depression of industrial cities, and the general hideousness of our democratic civilisation.

In days gone by, before Demos confidently set out to correct the mistakes of aristocracy and to give evolution something more than a nudge towards the millennium, there was no furniture in a peasant's cottage that was not right and beautiful, no china ornament on his mantelpiece that was not the work of an artist, and

no article of food on his table that was not wholesome and pure. The very glass out of which he drank his beer or his cider was so charming a thing that collectors now go hunting up and down the country to find it for their cabinets. The dances in which he joined on the village green were the festal and beautiful dances which ladies of fashion on the Continent urgently besought Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to teach them, since they only knew one or two of them. His music, where it was not the exquisite melodies of Purcell or the charming songs of the two Arnes and Horn, was the traditional music of his fathers or his own self-composed rounds and catches. His games were the free and jovial games of his ancestors. And as for his dress, and the dress of his wife and children, they so blended with the beauty of the countryside that a ploughman driving his team, a thatcher mounting his ladder, a blacksmith at the door of his forge, a hedger and ditcher at work with his bill-hook, or a family going to church on a feast-day, enriched rather than offended the grace of nature.

Let a man look now into the home of the average workman and see whether he can there discover any single thing which is not either sordidly ugly or most miserably depressing. Furniture of the vilest, crockery and glass of the coarsest, ornaments of the most forbidding, pictures of the sickliest; on the table adulterated food, on the backs of the inmates shoddy

clothes, on the dresser a gaudy gramophone scratching out jazz music, and in the hands of the father a cheap illustrated newspaper full of crime, sex-provocations, and gambling. Such is the home of the prosperous English workman; and who, then, can wonder that there is a demagogue at the street corner waiting for him to emerge that he may be recruited in the ranks of organised discontent, presently to be used by the Communist exploiter?

One cannot move about the country in summer-time without encountering these poor degraded multitudes, drinking out of bottles as charabancs bear them through the golden air, littering sylvan solitudes with the tins and greasy wrappings of their luncheons, lying in hordes on the shores of the sea with handkerchiefs over their faces and hands folded over their distended stomachs, or sitting with their backs against the grey walls of an historic ruin reading a picture paper.

The education that they have received out of the rates has destroyed their contacts with nature and given them none of the scholar's contacts with culture. They look with uncomprehending mind on river, moor, woodland, and breaking wave; they listen with only a dazed awareness in their ears to the song of skylark and thrush; and the stars shining over their heads, if they are noticed at all, only bewilder them. Robbed of this love of nature, which was once the inheritance of every Englishman,

they have been given no compensating joy by the schoolmaster. They cannot see the difference between a beautiful house and an ugly one, between a noble picture and a silly one, between a piece of literature and the merest folly of balderdash, between a comedy by Sheridan and the vilest absurdity of the American cinematograph. Their vote affects the destinies of India and the future of the British peoples, everything that is exquisite, precious, and sacred in English civilisation lies at their mercy, but they have never read a sonnet of Shakespeare, never heard the name of Keats, never hummed the music of Byrd, and never stood with gladness and joy before a picture by Constable or Crome.

All that education has done for these people is to lead to their exploitation by the proprietors of Sunday newspapers; all that higher wages has done for them is to place them at the mercy of manufacturers of shoddy clothes and tawdry furniture; and all that leisure has brought to them is an opportunity of sitting in a picture-theatre or crowding into the congestion of a football-ground.

Never before has there been so great and so wholesale a degradation of human faculties, and seldom, if ever, so unblushing an exploitation of human life by the greedy and the bestial.

Many people of education, deploring the ugliness of modern life and the brutalisation of the multitude, attach themselves to the Labour Party in the belief that what they call

industrialism is responsible for this wholesale havoc in our midst.

They do not indict Demos, but vent their wrath and indignation on the capitalist. It is not too much Democracy, in their opinion, which has wrought this great mischief, but too little; let everyone have a vote, boys and girls as well as men and women, let that vote be given to the Labour Party, and soon the smudge of commercialism would be wiped from England's face and the degrading spirit of an acquisitive society be exorcised from her body.

This view of our problem is a notable symptom of the muddleheadedness which passes for rational thinking in all democratic countries. For industrialism is a creation of Democracy, and the commercial exploiters of the multitudes are as plainly the children of Democracy as the Communistic demagogue and the professional politician. The false freedom introduced by Democracy opened the gates of national life to every sort and condition of unconscionable adventurers, exposing the unprotected and woolly-headed multitude to a thousand perils at the hands of confidence tricksters. It was not the English gentleman who seized the opportunity of democratic freedom to rob and degrade his poorer countrymen either in the guise of a manufacturer, newspaper proprietor, or a cheapjack of politics. It was the yeoman, the small tradesman, and the workman sharper-witted than his fellows. Even to this day most of the mills in

Lancashire and Yorkshire are the property of working men, and among the richest of our manufacturers and merchants even now are men who rose only the other day from the ranks of the proletariat.

The more intellectual followers of the Labour Party recognise this truth, and perceive that the first and greatest blunder of Democracy lay in the unconditional freedom it conferred upon the multitude. They do not go so far as the Communists in regarding freedom as a superstition and slavery as an ideal, but they persuade themselves that a moderate exercise of socialistic principles would correct the most evil of the consequences of democratic commercialism. In other words, industrialism is to remain, but its officers are to be changed.

The factory siren will still hasten the clogs and shawls of the multitude through the streets of dawn, and every pay-day at the week's end find the shipwright, the iron founder, the collier, and the railway worker lining up to receive his wages. Industrialism will not vanish. The pressure of mass production will not be lessened. There will still remain the tremendous necessity of producing cheaply in order to exchange British products for the food and raw materials essential to the existence of forty million people in these islands. Everything, in fact, which at present makes England hideous and renders the life of the working man monotonous will continue to

exist under a Socialist Government. The only change will be in the working man's master. That master is to be a state official.

But this state official in charge of British industry will find himself as hard driven as the capitalist to meet in foreign markets the competition of nations which work longer hours and content themselves with lower wages. The identical problems with which the capitalistic manufacturer has now to wrestle will confront him at every turn, and when he goes in panic haste to the rates, to help him out of his uneconomic philanthropy towards his workers, he will discover that to increase those rates is further to penalise his products in foreign markets.

Socialism can no more change the present character of industrialism than a new theology can change the essential problems of man's moral nature. To function at all it would be forced to introduce the iron discipline of militarism, and except for a legion of political adventurers at the head of an extravagant bureaucracy the freedom of the individual would cease to exist.

In the next chapter we will look more closely into this difficult economic problem, contenting ourselves for the present with a warning to the sentimental sympathisers with Labour that Democracy in the form of Socialism, far from being able to tidy up our industrial confusion, can only add to it, and that in its struggle to exist it will be bound to destroy the last vestiges of individual liberty.

The point to be established in this chapter is the all-important one that the principle of democratic government involves a fatal and an all-round lowering of standards. Directly a nation abandons the idea of reverence for Authority and commits every question in human life to the arbitrament of the multitude, the ancient standards raised by genius and experience fall to the ground.

This fact is most clearly seen in the region of the arts. When an educated aristocracy was the sole judge of beauty and truth, every artist and craftsman in the nation sought to win its favour. Before that incorruptible court of judgment he had to appear with his poems, his music, his architecture, his books, his pamphlets, his pictures, his furniture, his glass, and his tapestry; and not until he had won a verdict in his favour could he hope to receive a material reward for his labour.

But as soon as this small and select court of judgment was abolished and the Voice of the People was declared to be the Voice of God, numbers of inferior men who could turn their hands to various arts and crafts immediately set out to enrich themselves at the expense of the mob. To please an ignorant multitude was far easier than to satisfy a choice minority, and to please that huge mob on a gigantic scale meant unimaginable wealth to the prostitute of art. Hence came a universal degradation of England's spiritual life, which increased in volume and in power as the mob learned to

read and acquired a higher wage for its mechanical toil. The theatre and the music-hall sought to provide it with the sentimental drama and the coarse comic songs that it alone could understand; the painter hurried to the machines of the oleograph merchant with pictures which degraded pathos and plunged even religion into the mire of sickly sentimentality; the newspaper proprietor lowered the price and increased the size of his sheet in order to catch the pennies of the mob with tales of incest, adultery, murder, and burglarious adventure; the manufacturer and the shopkeeper laid themselves out to create and to display not those things which were serviceable, workmanlike, and beautiful, but any false and tawdry thing which could dazzle the eyes of ignorance and whet the appetite of a low ambition. For the first time in history plush-covered furniture appeared in the world, and the manufacture of false jewellery, false clothing, and false food became a serious activity of the world's commerce.

It is carefully to be borne in mind that with the rise of plutocracy from the ranks of the working classes, and with every fresh energy of public education, this defilement of English life has increased, not lessened, until at the present time our civilisation has reached a degree of debasement which seems as if it can terminate in nothing but collapse.

For with Democracy's contempt for cultural standards has gone also its respect for moral

standards. Aristocracy, no longer sensible of a grave responsibility, has almost surrendered to the vulgarities and materialism of plutocracy, and the multitude, ever craving to be in the fashion, is now hungrily seeking to obtain for itself "the good time" of the lawless classes ahead of it. The notion of patriotism only comes into existence when the nation is threatened by a physical danger from without, and the notion of duty has long since been relegated to the absurdities of Victorian philanthropy. "May not a man say what he likes?"—that famous democratic challenge which irritated Matthew Arnold, has now become "May not a man do what he likes?" Each man is a law to himself. Not that which the greatest have said we should strive to be, however often we fall and however difficult our circumstances, is now the actuating force in human life, but the lowest and most perverted appetites of our animal nature. We are to be true to ourselves, to our lowest selves. Morality is an inhibition, and inhibitions vex and irritate the body. If we find in ourselves a desire for education, let us guide it into the channel of competitive examinations and seek to secure a place in the world which has a pension for its chief reward. If we are artists, let us begin our work by discovering what it is that the mob would have from us.

There is no crown of laurels to compare with a bank balance. Let the whole movement of the world be frankly towards the trough,

and he who manages to get both feet in the swill, let him be our king.

"Anarchy" is a term which means "lawlessness," and without standards there can be no law. The social and political value of religion has been the exalted standard of conduct it elevated in the midst of humanity, a standard of behaviour which not merely rebuked the thief and the harlot, but which reduced the pomps of ostentation to the pantomime of vulgarity and the selfishness of ambition, or any discourtesy of manner, to the savage level of barbarity. So long as that standard stood in our midst, so long was there a right spirit in the world contending with a wrong spirit. But with the rise of Democracy, religion has lost its authority, and now exhibits its standards as a beggar exhibits his sores and mutilations, seeking rather to extract a passing alms from the triumphant horde of Democracy than to impose the Will of God upon mankind.

Culture, too, has crept away from the market-place and left the mob to judge for itself the things that belong to a man's peace. A man of learning, if he happen to dispute one of the judgments of the mob, is derided as a "highbrow" and driven into silence and obscurity with the whip of ridicule. "Admire what I admire," cries Demos, "love what I love, find your pleasure where I find my pleasure, do what I do, say what I say, think

what I think, or take yourself off and go to perdition."

This voice of Demos, let us be careful to recognise, is not the voice of the multitude, but the voice of him who has ever spoken for the multitude since the dawn of public education, that is to say, the prostitute of art, the exploiter of ignorance, the parasite of brute force. The mob is managed, is herded, driven, and marketed by men who have the greatest of their vested interests in its ignorance, and who are the sworn enemies of true Authority, because only Authority can unmask their pretensions and deliver their victim out of their hands.

The struggle of these men lies, first, in the destruction of all standards; second, in the maintenance of the trough as the true end of human existence. Their success has been rendered easier by the surrender of Aristocracy to Materialism, by the complaisance of Religion, and by the timidity of Culture. Popular science has also lent them its aid, for its influence on ignorance and folly has been destructive of all reverence for human life and all humility in man's soul. No power in the state, indeed, has exerted itself to prevent the triumph of Democracy, and the triumph of Democracy is before us in the destruction of everything beautiful in England, in the lowering of all cultural standards, and the conversion of the nation into a howling mob seeking its satisfaction on the lowest levels of human existence.

Everything of which we are justly proud in our present civilisation is the achievement of individual men, not of the state or of the bureaucracy, and most of these achievements, which have added to the comfort of life and the easement of labour, have come from men of science who do not determine truth by means of the ballot-box.

But in congratulating ourselves on these many inventions, we should sometimes remind ourselves of Comte's great saying, "The highest progress of man and of society consists in gradual increase of our mastery over all our defects, especially the defects of our moral nature."

CHAPTER IV

SMATTERERS

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that there are nine men in England entitled to make an authoritative statement on economics; it would be safer to say that there are seven.

Yet there is no science in the whole range of rational inquiry on which the noisy cheapjacks of Democracy express more confident dogmas, and no topic to which their dupes more greedily listen.

This phenomenon of our time—a time in which even physicists and zoologists have become modest, and abandoned the truculence which marked the utterances of their predecessors in the 'eighties—appears to strike neither wonder nor amusement in the public mind, and to rouse in the soul of the nation no sense of its danger.

Reflection should teach us, however, that under a system of popular government grave errors in economic thinking are capable of working the most perilous injury to a nation, and, if persisted in, of wrecking the entire fabric of a state, however ancient its power or extended its territory.

A convenient example of the disasters wrought by false theories in economics was furnished last year by Dr. James Bowie of Manchester to the British Association. He told his audience that from 1900 to 1918 inclusive there were 2,536 stoppages of work, making an average of 134 a year. In 1922 there were 155; in 1923, 186; in 1924, 190; and in 1925, 162.

The workmen who indulged in these stoppages at the beck of their " organisers "—in some cases men who openly aver themselves as traitors seeking to bring England into line with Soviet Russia by wrecking the entire structure of British industrialism—solemnly believed that they were bettering their position, and even now are entirely persuaded that a strike is a rational way of settling an industrial dispute.

But Dr. Bowie has worked out the cost of these interminable and savage wrangles in one particular trade, including the cost to the workers themselves, and this is his considered judgment on the matter:

> . . . it can be safely said that the miners through industrial disputes since 1900 have lost in wages a sum which would have enabled them to buy up, lock, stock, and barrel, the whole of the collieries of this country; in voluntary absenteeism during the same period they have lost another sum of equal amount; while the community, at a conservative estimate, has since 1900 lost directly, to say nothing of indirect

loss, at least four times the total present-day capital value of the collieries.[1]

The absurd error which is responsible for this calamitous conduct on the part of the working classes, and which still mainly rules all their economic thinking, is not, it should be noticed, in that high region of the science where even the greatest authorities begin to grow dizzy, but in its low and humblest beginnings, where long ago human experience turned economic wisdom into homely proverbs.

Some centuries before the dawn of Democracy men knew, children knew, that they could not have their cake and eat it too, and that into a pint pot they could not get more than a pint or take out more than they put in. They knew that to increase the division of wealth they must first multiply it, and also that it is beyond the wit of man to subtract a greater number from a lesser.

But so ignorant are the working classes of the world at the present time that there is scarcely a nation which pays the smallest attention to the proverbial wisdom of experience and which is not ready to run its head against the stone walls of economic law at the bidding of any political impostor posing as an economist.

Sir Josiah Stamp, from whose lucid and authoritative writings I shall quote extensively

[1] This statement was made before the long, mad coal strike of 1926.

in the next chapter, has lately said that there is scarcely any work so urgently needed in the modern world as an education of the masses in the elements of economics. They are not in peril, the civilisation of Christendom is not in peril, from Democracy's ignorance of anything abstruse or uncertain in economics, but from its ignorance of the simplest and most kindergarten elements of this essential science. The plotting Communist, in fact, does not need to acquaint himself with the higher learning of economics in order to play upon his dupes; for so ignorant are those dupes, and so exposed by their democratic vanity to be the easy victims of charlatans and rogues, that, with his tongue in his cheek, he can quite cheerfully rearrange the alphabet of economics, under their very noses, to spell their ruin.

Nonsense of a kind almost unbelievable, and impossible in any other science, is spoken even by the most educated, sincere, and careful of Socialists when they advance for their political purpose into this sphere of economics. If they were asked to give an opinion on chemistry or physiology, no doubt they would immediately disclaim their right to express any ideas at all on a subject so difficult; but when it comes to the science of economics, the science most vital to the prosperity and continued existence of their nation, and perhaps the most difficult of all the sciences, they are prepared at a moment's notice to get upon their feet and tell an audience of working men exactly how

they should think and how they should act.

These same men, called upon to answer questions by a board of competent economists, could be made to look more ridiculous in five minutes than a schoolboy in the third standard undergoing an examination in Greek at the hands of Dr. Gilbert Murray.

Such is the grotesque spirit of Democracy that the smatterer is treated as an authority only in the science most vital to its welfare. The charlatan in medicine and religion has no easy time of it in these days, but the charlatan of economics, provided that he can use a few big words and wave his arms about with the histrionic gestures of moral indignation, can always be sure of an audience, and may even climb from the best-paid job in trade-union organisation to a seat in the Cabinet.

That the danger from this illogical state of things is very great may be seen at once by considering the strange and illuminating case of Mr. A. J. Cook. It is quite certain that if Mr. Cook had devoted himself to surgery he would not have risen to be President of the College of Surgeons by shouting anatomical nonsense from one end of the country to the other. Or if he had devoted himself to the profession of arms, it is inconceivable that he would have come into possession of a field-marshal's baton by going from one barrack-square to another inculcating a system of gunnery more certain to destroy its practitioners

than to inflict damage on the enemy. But this same person, invading the field of economics, is at once hailed as an authority, and honoured as a practical leader, by over a million men employed in an industry essential to the national prosperity. He has passed no examination in economics. His knowledge of history has never been brought to any authoritative test. His fitness to move out of the ranks of the workers into a foremost place of leadership has never been proved. But immediately this unqualified person becomes by the votes of ignorant men their accredited leader, he can demand interviews with the greatest managers of capital, order his followers to be idle, threaten to destroy the trade which is basic to all our chief export industries, and insist upon seeing the Prime Minister of the greatest empire in the history of the world, even after having publicly denounced him as a liar and a hypocrite.

Now, in any other sphere of the national life Mr. Cook would be practically a harmless person. He could not greatly disturb the national peace or diminish the national prosperity if he had elected to function as a lawyer, an oculist, a bookmaker, a Baptist minister, or a film merchant. But because he has chosen to function in a sphere vital to the very existence of English civilisation, he becomes a person of first-rate importance, his mediocrity towering over the genius of other men with a Himalayan immensity; and because he has a

vast body of working men behind him, and because this is a democratic country, no one in the nation dares to interfere with him, even when he is inflicting hardship and suffering on millions of people, even when his vanity, his perversity, and his obstinacy have paralysed the entire economic life of a great nation.

It need not be argued that in a country governed by scientific intelligence, and not by democratic ignorance, a person like this, because of the injury he can do to the nation, would be more quickly laid by the heels than any murderer or thief. Russia itself is superior to Democracy in this respect, for the masters of that country shoot out of hand any critic of their tyranny who attempts to organise a strike or claims any such dangerous right as the right of free speech. It is indeed doubtful whether countries like the United States or the French Republic would allow an agitator to hold up their industrial life as Mr. Cook held up the industrial life of the British Islands, for in those countries trade unions are not above the law, and the good of the whole nation is considered a greater matter than the susceptibilities of an individual. In Italy, of course, the agitator has no more opportunities for wrecking the state than he enjoys in Soviet Russia; while even Spain, so easy-going and fatalistic, has roused herself at last to deal vigorously with the danger of economic madness.

It is, then, surely high time that the good

sense of the British people was called into action to deal with this increasing peril. Less than any other people in the world can we afford the luxury of strikes, for we are honestly paying our debts and, more than any other nation under the sun, must create wealth, a great surplus of which is necessary in order to discharge that tremendous obligation. Not only does the organiser of strikes hinder the creation of wealth, but he adds to the burden of rates and taxes which is already penalising the British manufacturer in every market of the world. In this way, obviously enough, he is making it more and more difficult for us to draw that 80 per cent. of our necessities in food and raw materials which comes to us from abroad. Therefore the organiser of strikes is to be regarded, not as a nuisance or as an inconvenience, but as an enemy; and unless we have the courage to treat him as an enemy his impudence will certainly increase, and his impudence alone is sufficient to deal us our death-blow.

CHAPTER V

SENTIMENT AND SECURITY

I HAVE said that many people are joining the ranks of the Labour Party out of disgust with the ugliness of industrialism and in the hope that Socialism will give us back a beautiful England and a happier populace. They are attracted, these people, many of whom are depressed Christians, by what they regard as the higher ethic of Socialism.

It happens that one of the greatest economists in the world, Sir Josiah Stamp, is a sincere Christian, and for the benefit of those who have adopted the politics of the Labour Party out of sympathy with "the higher ethic of Socialism," I will set down here certain clear statements made by Sir Josiah Stamp in dealing with this very question of ethics and economics. These statements occur in the first Social Service Lecture (1926) and are to be found in a volume published by the Epworth Press under the title of *The Christian Ethic as an Economic Factor*:

> I have noticed that the fervent and convinced statement on the platform that if only a spirit of universal brotherhood prevailed the problems of men would all

be solved never fails to raise audible and enthusiastic assent. But such a statement is not merely woefully wrong in its emphasis; it is also mischievous, because it dopes men's minds till they cannot see what action is really necessary, still less rise to action.

When I reflect upon the nature of the problems that bring misery and suffering in the world, and the silent, hard-working, self-denying souls who are trying to solve them, I think such talk is ungrateful to the point of unchristian heedlessness. The ravages and ills of cancer and consumption, the problems of ability and skill set at naught by the derangement of a distant market, the vagaries of the foreign exchanges and depreciation of currency, with its impoverishment of many worthy people and all its other attendant ills, the population problem, with the standard of life—these, and a hundred others, look up and cry, not so much for warm hearts as for cool heads.

He endeavours to explain to warm-hearted people the serious nature of economic law, telling them that economic principles *describe* the pudding of material life, but do not *prescribe* the ingredients.

The separate factors, the resultant effects of which are summarised in

economic principles, may be classified for our purpose as follows:

Natural:

(1) Land:—its fertility—especially its relative fertility; its relative response to special treatment—especially its *rate* of response.

Its position in relation to rivers, ports, seas, mountains, centres of population. Its natural products by climate and position.

(2) Seas: productivity; navigability; accessibility from centres.

(3) Climatic conditions.

Social:

(1) Political and constitutional systems.

(2) Codes of law.

(3) Fixed customs and religious sanctions (caste, taboo).

(4) Gregariousness — associations, unions, societies, opportunities for collective action. Desire for privacy.

(5) Accumulations of savings in the *past*; factories and plants.

Human:

(1) Physical necessities and differences, hunger, fatigue, sex, relation to climate, tastes.

(2) Family life, domestic affection, love of home or change.

(3) Motives to work, to consume, to

save; motive of emulation, vanity, self-sacrifice, pity.

(4) Ability to discover and organise.

"So delicate," he says, "are our social adjustments now dependent upon reliable monetary measurement of real satisfactions, that I do not hesitate to say the greatest single evil of our time is the instability of the monetary unit as a measure of real values."

As an example of loose thinking on this subject, he quotes a writer who says: "Throughout the ages it has been God's will (1) that men should work; (2) that they should receive as a result of their work the *full requirements of life.*"

I ask: What are the full requirements of life? Why should they be one thing here and quite another five hundred miles away; or one thing a hundred years ago and another to-day? People talk as though such a standard could be objectively determined and then insisted upon. Its complete relativity to time and place reduces such an idea as the "full requirements of life" to the same category of helpfulness as the assertion that a thing is "as long as a piece of string" or "as large as a nut." . . . What is regarded as beggarly subsistence to-day would, three generations ago, have been an impossibly

high standard of living. What we should call an overcrowded slum to-day—*when we have learnt by better conditions to make the comparison*—would, a hundred years ago, have been regarded as quite normal and satisfactory.

But relativity in point of place stares hard at us to-day. What is the standard to which men have a "right"—is it the American, or the British, or French, or Italian? All of them are conditioned mainly by economic forces, and certainly none of them will respond in any marked degree to wishing, or arguing, or ethical considerations. I well remember, when I was serving on the Dawes Committee on German Reparations, and we were considering the question of comparative national ability to bear burdens, with the necessary comparisons of total national incomes, the various nations agreed that the *minimum of subsistence* for each population should first be deducted, as it was only the balance of income that was capable of bearing a special burden. This minimum per head was, therefore, explored by the various representatives. The Americans were amazed at the figure suggested by the French and the Italians, and surprised even at the British; it seemed to them incredible. The Italians could not admit the British suggestion; and as for the American idea—when applied to Italy it blotted

out the whole national income. "Men and women have a right to food, housing, good wages, pensions, and many other things. Few would dispute the existence of these rights."[1] The writer criticises this assumption, quite legitimately, on the ground that the complementary duties and obligations are not recognised. I go much further, and criticise it on the ground that each community can share and use only what it has produced and what the stage of economic development it has reached has allowed it to produce. Any talk of "rights" beyond this, or of "God's will" to give the "full requirements," seems to me mere sentimentalism. If there is an absolute right, why does it vary so between people? Is it not a corollary that it should be the same "right" for all peoples, and that the British worker should forgo his advantages, and share and share alike with France, and Italy, or even the lower standards of the East?

"On analysis," he says, "you will find that the central feature of nearly every indictment on ethical grounds is the conception that redistribution of wealth—a correction of the appalling contrast between extreme riches and poverty side by side—would provide a world of conspicuously fuller and more satisfactory life for the masses. This view creeps in every-

[1] R. Wilberforce Allen, *Methodism and Modern World Problems*, p. 46.

where to such an extent that it seems impossible to believe that there can be any mistake about it. I suppose I have done my part in the statistical determinations of this problem, and shown the immense disparity and the unevenness of distribution. And I have never supported it as necessarily a good thing or a moral thing. But what I have protested, in and out of season, is that, however much you might correct it, and however just or moral the result would be, it would utterly fail to give economic satisfaction, and is disappointing in the extreme, so far as providing an improved standard of life to the masses is concerned."

> Only rarely does anyone, engaged in the fascinating task of expounding how big the slice of cake ought to be in order to satisfy their physiological, or decent, or moral criteria, trouble to measure the cake and count the family.
>
> When I read, in the latest work on this subject,[1] "if a thing is morally wrong it can never be economically right," I feel the epigram, but I cannot find the meaning. If it means that where there are several economic possibilities, one will be juster or more Christian than the others, and it cannot be morally right to rest content with anything less, then I understand it.

[1] R. Wilberforce Allen, *Methodism and Modern World Problems*, p. 44.

> But I would say whatever is economically right (i.e. inevitable) cannot be morally wrong. You may say that the universe is not kind if you wish. But it is not merely natural limitation that may be fixed—it is also arithmetic that is non-moral, and an astonishing amount of economics is contained in the sentiment, "You cannot get more than a pint out of a pint pot, nor more than you have put into it."

"The American worker," he says, "has a higher standard of life than the British. Why? Not because the business owner concedes him a higher percentage of the product as his reward—far from it. It is, of course, partly because in a rich and developing country the response of nature to each unit of human effort is higher, but it is also because he works harder and is more efficient; the 'total heap of production' is greater and there is more to share."

To show how the sentimental ideas of Socialism may be pursued till they carry enthusiasts into the region of self-deception and delusion, he quotes the following striking passage from *Melodies and Memories,* by Dame Nellie Melba:

> Now let me, being an honest woman, speak straight out about this question of Australia. It is to me the most beloved

country in the world, and for that reason I cannot bear to see Australia day by day thwarting its own development and throttling its very existence. Think for a moment of this country. It is larger than the United States, it has boundless natural wealth, infinite resources, and yet it has a population less than that of the single city of London. Parts of the northern territory, which are as big as France and Germany put together, have a population of only 1,000, and even that population is slowly decreasing. The distribution of the population is even more deplorable than the scarcity of it. For of the six million which compose Australia's inhabitants, over one million are in Sydney, another million are in Melbourne, and three other cities hold between them a further million. That leaves some three million scattered over an area which, I repeat, is bigger than the United States. What is the reason of it? I do not wish to maintain for one instant that the reason is entirely Australia's fault. Australia is a young country which has not had time to develop, and which has been constantly handicapped by the fact that it is so far away from the mother country. But I do not think that any thinking men will deny that there have been many occasions when my fellow-countrymen have been given the opportunity of developing themselves, and when they have thrust it aside. As long

as we have the Labour Party in Australia, so long will there be an actual prejudice against immigration, on the ground that if the country is flooded with immigrants those who are already in possession will find the struggle for life increasingly hard. There seems to be firmly rooted in a certain type of Australian mentality the idea that development means unemployment—surely one of the strangest paradoxes that has ever dwelt even in a Labour Member's mind. It is this short-sightedness which makes a city like Melbourne the dull city which it is to-day. A city where you begin the day by being told in your hotel that on account of trade-union regulations you cannot be certain of breakfast before eight o'clock, and in which you end it in some uninspiring restaurant which is struggling hard to hold up its head against quantities of restrictions. One of the last things I read in an Australian paper before returning home was that if a certain American jazz band was allowed to land, all the jazz bands in the continent would go on strike.

The jazz band did not land, and as a result the dancers of Australia are still dancing to the tunes which have long ago been mercifully forgotten in the countries of Europe.

The foolishness of Socialism is illustrated

every year on the shores of our coast. "I have seen," says Sir Josiah Stamp, "two holiday mites, holding jointly on to their tiny pail, staggering up from the sea-edge to fill the little pits they had dug in the sand, and then fall to violent altercation as to an equitable division of the contents between the two sand-holes, spending such time thereon as, with an unlimited ocean, would have sufficed to fill the moats a dozen times. Of this order is that type of trade-union policy which makes the pace of the slower and weaker the pace of all, and treats always of what is as though it were final, instead of seeing what may be; forgetting that only by the pioneer spirit have things become as good as they are, and probably only by one person doing or thinking differently from his fellow will the net return to human effort ever be better or fuller."

The real business of the moralist and the devout Christian in economics is to deepen in the mind of the individual worker a true sense of the difference between right and wrong; and by so doing they would not only raise the character of humanity but sensibly lessen the strain of our economic difficulties.

> If everybody could be relied upon to be completely honest in their work, in the quality of the product and the amount of time spent, the saving in industrial oncost, in timekeeping, in overlookers, in pre-

> cautions against theft, in checkers and testers of quality, would be enormous. A foreman would still be needed for directing work, but not for disciplinary and similar purposes, and the result would be that a given aggregate of economic products would be available with a far less expenditure of total human effort.

As to the notion of Capitalism which seems so greatly to distress the sentimentalist in politics, Sir Josiah Stamp forces even the most unbalanced of Socialists to see the economic truth of this matter and to realise that without Capital the life of a nation must sink into stagnation and perish of decay:

> One of the great, distinguishing features of the nineteenth century was the extraordinary accumulation of capital, which, working together with improvements in the arts, vastly increased the production of wealth *per head,* and, therefore, improved the standard of life. Now, as each new worker comes into the field of production from school life, it is important that he shall meet the quota of new capital waiting in the industrial field ready to co-operate with him in maintaining and improving the production per head. If that new capital is not there, he must share with the rest of the population the old capital, and share very much the old results of it. In a few years

the national productivity per head of the population will sink, either actually or in comparison with that of other communities, for the latest improved aids to production will not be forthcoming. No power on earth can avoid this result. It is not a question as to who *owns the capital.* That, in this particular connection, however important in others, signifies little. Quite ignoring the ownership of capital by the few—and possibly even because of it —the results and benefits before the War to the many were so tremendous that every member of the population became four times as well off in real goods and services as his predecessor in the nation 120 years before. The *existence* of the capital is the thing that matters for this purpose of industrial co-operation, because it brings new wealth into being.

No danger more immediately threatens our security than the suspicion concerning Capital brought into existence by the professional Socialist and his sentimental followers in the middle classes. To treat as a menace to the welfare of the worker the existence of money devoted to the machinery of production, to denounce as wrong and wicked a way of spending money which is essential to the increase of national wealth, this is not merely a gross and palpable lunacy, not only an illustration of the absurdity of the democratic principle in

government, but an immediate danger to the national existence.

"A democracy," says our author, "that will not let its wealthy save, and will not save for itself, must slowly sink in the scale of civilisation."

CHAPTER VI

DEMORALISATION

The view of economics summarised in the last chapter, that is to say, the view of an unchallengeable authority on the subject, does not commend itself to the political organisers of the working classes. On the contrary, these self-constituted authorities look in a clean contrary direction for the day-spring of Democracy's millennium.

Instead of increasing output, so that there may be more wealth in the country for general division, they would restrict it; instead of taxing incomes as lightly as possible, so that the rich may have more money to invest in the nation's industrial life, they would tax surplus wealth out of existence.

In some manner known only to themselves the leaders of Democracy intend to increase each man's slice of cake by diminishing the size of the cake itself, and to make future provision for the employment of a constantly increasing population by reducing to a condition of ruinous disrepair the already insufficient mechanism of our industrial life.

It need not be argued that a policy so transparently insane could not conceivably obtain in a country even sleepily aware that

the employment of reason in politics is a matter of general importance.

In a speech at Guildhall in November of last year Mr. Baldwin dismissed with a good-humoured jest the warnings of those who consider that the present state of England is perilous. He reminded such people that "although the conditions, the environment, may be new and constantly changing, our native character and traditions are very old and ever stable." At that moment a million Englishmen were unashamedly accepting the proceeds of a tyrannical levy on the starvation wages of overworked Russian workmen; worse still, worse even than that disgraceful crime against English self-respect, they were affecting to believe that the poor Russian serf, so infinitely worse off than themselves, had himself given this charity to his English comrade. But Mr. Baldwin assures us, and half the newspapers of the country agreed with him, that we are safe because our native character stands sure.

Optimism of this order is natural to a man of such attractive pleasantness and goodwill as the Prime Minister, but it is a condition of mind which cannot possibly commend itself to anyone who looks below the political surface of our national life, certainly not to one who, like a surgeon examining a tormented body, searches into the troubles of the present time.

Unfortunately for our "native character,"

or for any speedy return to sane thinking, the crazy economics of Labour have had a most disastrous effect on the moral nature of the British workman. Encouraged by his professional organisers and exploiters to regard Capital as an enemy, and to regard himself as a wage-slave whose pockets are for ever being picked by his employers, the younger British workman has fallen into a condition of mind which was almost totally unknown to the working classes twenty years ago.

He sees no shame at all in living on the rates. The proud sense of self-reliance and manly independence which distinguished his father appears to him old-fashioned and ridiculous; while the parasitical spirit of the pauper, which his father contemptuously laughed at as something beneath the dignity of manhood, seems to him perfectly right and proper, certainly not a thing of which to be ashamed.

Why should he hesitate to strike? There are no consequences worth speaking about. Let him down tools whenever he wishes; his union will provide him with so much money, while the rates will make up the rest. Why should he care whether his employers do well or ill? Does it matter to him which way it goes? Let them discharge him, and he can go on the dole. Why not? The dole represents a part of the money which Capital has filched from Labour in times past.

This reckless, slovenly, and parasitical person, when he does go to work, goes with

no other idea in his head than to do as little as possible. Slacking is no longer looked down upon as a moral offence, but looked up to as a Socialist virtue. Argue with him that his slacking is dishonest, that he is in truth no better than a thief, and one of his agitators will intervene and will quote to you a justification for slacking from the works of a truly religious and scholarly Socialist, Mr. R. H. Tawney of Oxford:

> The building operative whose job is drawing to its close, and who in the past has had to tramp the streets for months in search of another, may think that he has a duty to his employer, but he reflects that he has a prior duty to his wife and children. So he "makes the job last," and he is right.[1]

"And he is right." Right morally, right economically! Economically his slacking means that the house he builds will cost more in rent to the workman who takes it; morally his slacking means that he encourages in his own mind the tendencies and habits of every low parasite in the elementary stages of evolution; but he is told by an educated preacher of Socialism that he is right, and he is told by those who live upon the wages of agitation that he is right.

This habit of looking on industry as something

[1] *The Acquisitive Society*, p. 176.

to be robbed and cheated leads among the lowest kinds of men to a particularly base kind of stealing. They lack the courage, these British working men, of the midnight burglar, and the hazardous daring of the street purse-snatcher; they wait till the back of a foreman is turned before they grab a roll of lead roofing, slip a useful tool into their pockets, or slide their hands into a crate of goods, goods that they are paid either to pack or to transport. Stealing of this character, pilferage as it is called, has become so common that a considerable part of industry's overhead charges now consists in wages paid to detectives and foremen specially employed to guard against such ruinous loss.

Let Mr. Baldwin, and those who think with him concerning the stability of English character, consider the following figures:

"Before the war," says Mr. Maurice Hill, of the Chamber of Shipping, "a shipping company expected to pay from £40 to £100 in theft claims on an outward voyage from this country; of late the figure ruling has been about £1,000, rising sometimes to as much as £2,000 or £3,000. One well-known company whose losses in this respect were no more than 1.44*d.* per ton of cargo carried in 1913 found that this had increased to 26.91*d.* last year. Another company was, a year ago, paying claims at the rate of £250,000 a year, while the loss to London alone has been estimated at £3,500,000 annually."

This subject occasionally figures in our newspapers and is dismissed almost as soon as it is observed, greater attention being paid to the

action of a trade union in threatening a strike or to the action of employers in resisting an uneconomic demand from their workpeople; but to anyone capable of deep thinking here is a symptom of the most arresting kind pointing to a disease in our midst the gravity of which cannot be exaggerated. What is the importance of a strike or a lock-out compared to a rot in the moral character of the English people? What does it matter whether our trade returns are good or bad if the nation is ceasing to know the difference between right and wrong?

Mr. Tawney, for whose intellect and character I have a true respect, would be the last person in the world to condone so low and detestable a crime as pilferage; but it should surely be clear to him that if a building operative may regard a dishonest spinning-out of his job as right, in spite of its obvious economic consequence on others and its obvious moral consequences in his own character, we must not expect a transport worker to be greatly troubled by the economic consequences to British trade or the moral consequences in his own character, of conduct which he regards as getting out of Capital some of his back-pay.

No damage done by Socialistic teaching to the people of this country is so deep-seated and far-radiating as the doctrine which encourages them to regard industry as something to be exploited in their own interest, and the em-

ployer as an enemy to be hoodwinked and cheated at every turn. It was the consequences, moral and economic, of this doctrine on the Italian working classes which converted Mussolini from Socialism and led him, from the outset of his heroic revolution, to teach the nobler and creative doctrine that each man's industry is a part of his patriotism. But we still suffer from the crooked morality of Socialistic pedagogues and Communistic agitators. Patriotism in their mouths is a word of contempt, a superstition beneath the notice of crafty men learning to slack economically and taught to regard the honest and clever workman as a traitor to his class. No man in the eyes of English Socialists is so easy an object of derision and abuse as the Italian statesman who has made industry and morality an expression of each man's patriotism.

The English workpeople thus demoralised by Socialistic doctrine are not only the arbiters of British destiny, but the parents of English posterity. One who loves his country may well regret to think that such men should choose our legislators and determine the political destinies of this great Empire; but surely he must tremble at the far more appalling thought that men of this low moral nature and this lunatic way of thinking are parents of our race, creators of the next generation of Englishmen.

One of the most capable and courageous of

Labour leaders, Mr. Frank Hodges, has seen the disastrous consequences of extremism, and has warned his constituents, but to little effect, that their present policy can lead nowhere except to chaos and destitution:

> A great danger to the economic well-being of this country lies in the widespread activity and propaganda of the Communists, that organisation of extremists which has its birthplace in Moscow and forms a Minority Movement in the ranks of organised Labour.
>
> Unhappily, owing to the general apathy and indifference of the average trade-union member, these instigators of disorder succeed in getting themselves appointed to various official positions, and from these key positions or coigns of vantage adopt the tactics known as "boring from within," whereby in time they gradually undermine the whole of the trade-union structure. . . .
>
> In the course of time these disturbing persons get elected to even higher and more responsible positions. They draw their salaries from the hard-earned subscriptions of the trade-union member, and at the same time are out in full cry for the destruction of the very organisation which gives them sustenance, presumably in the hope that when their objective is attained they will enjoy even greater authority and power than is possible for them under

the orthodox constitution of the trade union.

It is a lamentable fact that while the "red" element in this country has been most active during the last few years, the trade-union leaders, for the most part, have taken no notice of the propaganda and work of the Minority Movement. Trade-union members have likewise remained apathetic and indifferent.

The real danger has now become manifest, and responsible trade-union leaders should now do all in their power finally to destroy its influence. The rank and file of trade unionists should also be encouraged to interest themselves in the local branches so as to make it impossible for the "red" elements to be elected in any official position whatever.

The sporadic and unofficial strikes which have developed during the past few years and have led nowhere except in the direction of disorder can in many instances be traced to the activities of the Communists. As long as this state of affairs is allowed to persist there cannot be any definite improvement in the lot of the average workman.

It would seem as though British industry were in a condition of perpetual guerrilla warfare, tending to check normal production and to handicap us in the world-fight for markets, while the industries of other countries around us appear to be

encroaching more and more on what we have come to regard as our special preserves.

I have been fighting almost single-handed the belief that improvement in the lot of the worker can only come through economic chaos, but I am aware that a growing number of trade-union leaders hold the same view. I am glad to find that such leaders as J. R. Clynes and C. T. Cramp are sparing no effort to warn trade unionists of the very grave danger which lies in the propaganda of those who seek their social and economic objective through industrial disorder.

The idea that any benefit can come by such means should be fought day by day until it is completely eradicated. After all, one has only to imagine Great Britain squeezed out of the world-market to comprehend the awful misery that would fall upon our forty-seven and a half million countrymen!

Our population has arrived at its present stage, and continues to grow, on the assumption—in fact, on the sole assumption—that our industries are for ever expanding and that our place in the world is for ever improving. The realities of the world-competition are a sufficient contradiction of this assumption. The development of other countries should be a warning to us to do everything in our power to keep up the maximum efficiency in our

> industries so as to improve upon our present standard of life.
>
> Immediately industrial leaders adopt this attitude, whether they be national, district, or local, an entirely new attitude will be developed towards all those people who preach the gospel of economic disorder.

Clear cool sense of this order is not to the taste of the young workman, and over a million miners rejected Mr. Hodges in order to acclaim Mr. Cook as their true leader. Their moral natures have been utterly degraded by the ethics of Socialism, and in spite of the schoolmaster their intelligence is of so low an order that they cannot perceive the difference between the logic of the one man and the ravings of the other.

That such a person as Mr. Cook should become a person of any consequence in England is, as I have said before, one of the clearest conceivable indications that Democracy is an unsound, unscientific, and indefensible system of government. Perhaps it will make this point clearer if we glance somewhat more closely at the record of Mr. Cook, reminding ourselves that no absurdity of utterance, no contradiction of his own words, no failure to perform his promises, and no astonishing inconsistency in his behaviour, has had the smallest effect in lessening the confidence and affection of his followers.

In a speech delivered to the Engineers' Club in November 1926, before the coal strike had

come to its ignominious end, Lord Birkenhead accused Mr. Cook of conduct gravely disloyal during the Great War, reminded his audience that Mr. Cook had been in jail, and alleged that Mr. Cook had "imbued with Moscow principles" one of the greatest trade unions in the country. After asserting that, as a humble disciple of Lenin, Mr. Cook would naturally listen to the counsels of Moscow, Lord Birkenhead continued as follows:

> There has never been an occasion in the whole history of England in which any trade-union leader who claimed the allegiance of any considerable body of English workmen has proclaimed and admitted that he was the slave and the serf of a foreign power. And of what a foreign power! A foreign power of whom I dispute, and have disputed, the right in existing conditions to be recognised at all in this country. Only a fortnight ago a meeting assembled at Moscow of Mr. Cook's paymasters in which they determined the most fruitful lines of Russian activity, and they said quite plainly that in two quarters of the world they discerned the prospects of fruitful advance.
>
> The first was by continuing to finance the existing coal dispute. The second was by exacerbating every conceivable ground of difference in China. . . .
>
> We have to face the greatest menace that has ever been presented to our exist-

> ence—greater than the challenge of Louis XIV, greater than the challenge of Philip of Spain, greater than the challenge of Napoleon—are we going in the end to be defeated by a Moscow pantomime artist?[1]

This Moscow pantomime artist succeeded Mr. Frank Hodges as secretary of the Miners' Federation in April 1924, and hailed his advent to power with the announcement, "I am still a Red, with all that that means." A little later he told the world, "I believe solely and absolutely in Communism." At the beginning of the New Year came the message, "I am proud to be a disciple of Karl Marx and a humble follower of Lenin."

Then he began to threaten:

> Mr. Baldwin and the Home Secretary will wake up and find something they never dreamed about. It is nearly ready. I am in the inner circle, one of the Big Five. I hold the most important position in this country to-day.

Later he declared boldly: "I want a revolution."

These utterances, any reasonable man would have said, were quite sufficient to reveal Mr. Cook's purpose. As a Communist, as a humble follower of Lenin, he could not possibly desire to see the prosperity of the British coal industry. Any miner capable of even elementary

[1] Speech to the Engineers' Club, November 3, 1926.

thinking must surely have concluded that Mr. Cook's purpose was rather the triumph of a political notion than the solid prosperity of the British miner. Therefore when Mr. Cook said, "Wages will be the immediate object, but we are going to get something more"; and added a few days later, "We have got to prepare ourselves for the control of this industry; any attempt to compromise would damn our ultimate objective," no sane miner could have doubted for a moment that the Secretary of his Federation was inviting him to act as a Red, to think as one who believed solely and absolutely in Communism, and to behave as one who was proud to be a disciple of Karl Marx and a humble follower of Lenin.

But the British miner never suggested that Mr. Cook should not talk nonsense, and never gave the slightest indication that he was not prepared implicitly to obey the leadership of this boastful and unbalanced Communist, so different a person from Mr. Hodges.

Moreover, the miner remained entirely undeceived when this tremendous leader of theirs, growing more and more offensive, more and more warlike, suddenly finding himself faced by a manful attitude on the part of the mine-owners, absolutely changed his tune and began to bleat like a lamb strayed from its mother.

"A struggle is being forced on us!" he cried.

Less than a month ago it had been "We have got to prepare ourselves for the control

of this industry" ; but now, "A struggle is being forced on us!"

> The owners (he cried) are pushing forward what must become the greatest industrial struggle ever known in this country. A struggle is being forced on us.

In other words, this leader of Democracy, having strutted before the world as a Kaiser Wilhelm of Communism, one of the Big Five, holding the most important position in the British Empire, suddenly crumples up, like Kaiser Wilhelm at the outbreak of war in 1914, and complains, like a bully with a policeman's hand on his collar, that a struggle is being forced upon him.

But just as the German Kaiser rallied his spirits and gave orders for the immediate annihilation of the British Army, so this disciple of Lenin, having exclaimed with pious horror, "My last word to the Government is *Count the cost*!" turned to his Prussianised soldiers of industry and announced:

> Soon, I am telling you, the railwaymen and the dockers won't be handling coal, and the foreign workers won't be raising it.

Apparently his victims believed him, and continued to believe him when the railwaymen and dockers went on handling coal and the

German comrade worked very much harder than usual in order to supply England and England's former markets with foreign coal.

Again he changed his note and piped dolefully, "The country wants peace badly. I am prepared to have a ballot and to recommend it to my committee." He said indeed that "any man who lengthens the struggle is a murderer." What Russia thought of this extraordinary change we do not know, but we do know that Mr. Cook, after uttering these doleful warnings, suddenly mounted his war-horse again and exclaimed, "Although the enemy broke our front in Warwickshire, we have replaced it. We are now solid, and if we only hold out a little longer we will win."

Some of the miners felt that they had had too much of such Hohenzollern kingship and, taking their courage in both hands, went back to work. Mr. Cook rushed hither and thither exhorting the faithful to remain out, denouncing the sensible miner in the pits as "a dirty traitor," and boasting in London:

> I could go to-morrow to Notts and Derby and get the reception of a king. I could bring them out again. I have done it, and could do it again.

In the wake of his inflammatory speeches there was a wave of disgraceful terrorism, in which women joined, the brutal terrorism of thousands against a few, but a cowardly and

despicable terrorism which fled panic-stricken at the appearance of small bodies of police.

So the wretched business went on week after week, inflicting immeasurable suffering on the poor and the sick, inflicting murderous loss on Britain's export trade, and ending at last in the inevitable victory of those who walk by the light of economic truth.

Now, such leadership need not be seriously discussed, nor is it my purpose in thus glancing at Mr. Cook's record to debate whether he is a Communist afraid of Communism when it comes to the point, or merely a street-corner demagogue who has used Communism to frighten the *bourgeoisie*. Whatever he may be at the centre of his character, and whatever may be the real ideas attempting to formulate themselves in the disorderly processes of his thinking, the one point which concerns us is that a man of his measure should play any part at all, much less a part of commanding importance, in the industrial and political life of a great nation.

Must we conclude that British Democracy is so lacking in simple intelligence that it will commit its fortunes into the hands of any ranter who promises it impossible blessings? Must we say that henceforth and for ever the evolution of the English race and the development of the British Empire will be interrupted, thrown back, and brought to the rim of ruin because the people of this great country cannot tell the difference between sense and nonsense?

I do not see how we can come to any other conclusion, or expect any other fortune, if the principle of democratic government continues to be accepted and the votes of the most ignorant are always to intimidate and outweigh the judgments of the wise.

Lord Birkenhead concluded the speech from which I have just quoted by assuring his audience, amid cheers, that the Government did not intend to let Mr. Cook wreck the fortunes of the British Empire:

> He has bankrupted not only his own trade union, he has bankrupted nearly every great trade union in the country. Speaking for myself, I say that we will not give way to a man like Cook, fed, as he is fed, on doctrines which his intelligence has never mastered and holding the belief that he can dictate to a great and ancient people; but we will teach him the lesson which we have taught to monarchs and dictators—that there is a greater entity in the character and quality of the English people than in any man, be he monarch, dictator, or demagogue.

These brave words, I regret to think, ring with no greater reality than the boasts of Mr. Cook or the optimism of Mr. Baldwin. They do not convince me either of wisdom or of courage in the Government. For, what is the value of a Government that allows an ignominious person like this "Moscow pantomime

artist " to bring to bankruptcy not only his own trade union, but " nearly every great trade union in the country "?

Is it one of the penalties of Democracy that both on the side of Right and on the side of Wrong there should be loud voices, boastful voices, and vainglorious voices, with threats flying from side to side and ruin eating deeply into the whole fabric of national life, while wisdom withdraws farther and farther from the foolish scene, and action sits with folded hands, waiting till the horse is out of sight and sound before it locks the stable door with a theatrical gesture.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.

So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

CHAPTER VII

BUREAUCRACY

If, as I have proved, Labour takes a quite contrary view of economics from that of the great economists, Conservative politicians, whatever their opinions may be, certainly do not act upon the authoritative view. Indeed, it may well be argued that their legislation and their administration reveal at every turn the influence of the Socialistic view.

Let us consider the case of Mr. Winston Churchill, one of the ablest and most courageous men in the Cabinet, and a statesman whose reign at the Home Office, the Admiralty, and the Colonial Office was marked by administrative work of the highest order.

Mr. Churchill is Chancellor of the Exchequer. He knows—it would be a gross insult to so notable an intelligence to dream otherwise for a moment—that the most serious economic factor in the financial condition of the nation is the long-continued paralysis of our export trade. He knows, too, that this export trade is paralysed by rates and taxes. He knows that every man on the dole, every striker getting relief from the rates, and every act of extravagant sentimentalism on the part of Socialistic local governments, and every un-

necessary clerk in the Civil Service, represent a burden on the back of our exporters.

He sees as clearly as any man that it is impossible for the exporting manufacturer to sell his goods against the competition of America, Germany, and Italy while the prodigious cost of his rates and taxes puts a price upon those goods far in excess of the price quoted by his untaxed rivals.

But if our exports continue to fall, if our markets continue to be taken from us by our lesser handicapped rivals, how in the world are we to obtain from overseas that 80 per cent. of food and raw materials which is essential to our safety?

Responsible for the finances of the country, loving his country, believing in the English destiny, and hitherto brave enough to face any opposition in a great and necessary cause, Mr. Churchill must surely long to free the British manufacturer from his hopeless burdens, and to wield the axe of economy in the forest of bureaucratic extravagance with something of the same heroic energy that Mussolini has shown in Italy.

But every Budget which he has introduced has made new demands upon the taxpayer, and his efforts at economy have resulted in nothing of any consequence to our threatened trade.

How do we account for so extraordinary a state of things? Let it be remembered, or the point is lost, that Mr. Churchill is a man of very

great intelligence and a man whose courage stands beyond the reach of challenge. We are not dealing with an unimaginative mediocrity or with a complaisant coward. We are dealing with a statesman of first-rate ability, of vivid imagination, of unusual energy and drive, and a man brave beyond the bravest. Moreover, he is a man of unabatable ambition, and one who would seize with both hands an opportunity for greatly distinguishing himself in the history of his country. How is it, then, that with his present opportunity for saving the country from the greatest of all its perils, he confesses year after year to pitiable impotence, and watches the decay of his nation's overseas trade without lifting a finger to save it?

There are two answers to this question. One is, that the Conservative Party is just as meekly responsive to the working-class vote as the Labour Party; and the other, that the democratic principle has so strengthened the power of the bureaucracy that no one dares to question its decisions.

As regards the first answer it is important to bear in mind that the Conservative Government has not only accepted the socialistic achievements of its predecessors in office, but has even itself made socialistic adventures. The dole remains. Subsidy has been used as a sop. A new Factories Act has been introduced. And there has been no move on the part of this Conservative Government to the

old principle that a man who refuses to work should be left to starve, nor any indication that an employer of labour is to be regarded as a benefactor to the state instead of a suspicious character requiring the constant supervision of bureaucratic inspectors.

The Royal Navy is no longer the great and mighty force of 1914, when a staff of less than 5,000 looked after its affairs; but its staff now is nearly 8,000. The Army has reduced its numbers, but instead of demanding 1,636 men to look after it, as was the case in 1914, we pay the wages for a staff of over 4,000. In 1914 the staff of the Inland Revenue was under 10,000; it is now nearly 20,000. In 1914 the expenses of the Civil Departments were under £4,000,000, they are now getting up to £12,000,000.

Apart altogether from the justification afforded by the vast debt which we are struggling to pay, at the tragic cost of crippling our industries, a Conservative Government might well affirm its faith in the gospel of individualism, and on that ground alone get rid of much expensive machinery in the state which is of a purely socialistic character. But with the tremendous justification of our war-debts, what excuse can a Conservative Government advance for tolerating expensive mushroom ministries born entirely of socialistic principles? What tangible good has the nation ever derived from the Ministry of Mines, or the Ministry of Labour? Is it not true that the

British Medical Council would willingly furnish the Government free of charge with information as valuable as any of the facts collected at enormous cost by the Ministry of Health? Why should the Government need an expensive Board of Trade when the Chambers of Commerce could keep it posted in all matters essential to the business of the country? A Board of Agriculture may be of use, but is its use essential? and could not as trustworthy and useful service be rendered to the Government by other bodies in the national life?

Mussolini found himself confronted by a bureaucracy too expensive for the Italian income. He did not trouble to consider what would become of the people who could comfortably be dispensed with, but dispensed with them. He acted as every honest and just person acts towards his servants when a serious fall of income renders a reduction of his household staff imperative. Mussolini set up no commission to inquire into these matters. He acted with the swiftness and decision of a man whose mind is ruled by absolute principles. With the relief from oppressive taxation afforded by this reduction of Italy's overhead charges, Italian industry revived, the discharged bureaucrats found usefuller work, and no one complained that the railway service was worse or that the Civil Service was inadequate.

No minister in the Conservative Government

has shown qualities of a Mussolini order; and it is quite certain that no Italian statesman would have acted with the courage and conviction of Mussolini if his Government had depended on the votes of Democracy.

It needs but little imagination to realise how Mr. Churchill would act as England's Chancellor of the Exchequer if he occupied the position of an autocrat. It is certain that there would be an immense exodus of clerks from Whitehall, a forcible interference with socialistic Local Authorities, and short shrift for anyone who interfered with the manufacturer's heroic efforts to restore the broken fortunes of the country.

But Mr. Churchill is not only a member of a Government very sensitive to democratic opinion, and very averse from a quarrel with the heresies of socialistic economics; he is also the obedient victim of a despotic bureaucracy.

Mr. Baldwin, as we observed in the last chapter, has comforted us with the assurance that, however great may be the changes in our national conditions and environment, our native character stands sure. I will bring this sentiment, already tested, to another simple test, and a test in which Mr. Baldwin himself is involved.

During the War, when public money was being scandalously wasted and immorality at home was shamelessly disgracing the self-

sacrifice of our fighting men on all the battle-fronts of the world, a lady of singular quality was persuaded, much against her own judgment, to attempt to restore order, decency, and intelligence in the Women's Royal Air Force.

This lady, Miss Violet Douglas-Pennant, had not completed two months' service in her difficult post when she was summarily dismissed. From that day to this, a period of nearly nine years, she has never been able to discover on what grounds she was subjected to the disgrace of dismissal. Mr. Baldwin has been approached in the matter, and has done nothing to satisfy her rightful sense of indignation. He has seen Mr. Cook, who called him a liar and a humbug, I know not how many times; but he has not been able to see this noble English lady even for half an hour. He has handed her a useless compliment by the hand of a secretary, but apparently he has never realised that every authentic instinct in a true Englishman's blood would urge him to right at all costs this shameful wrong. The cruel sufferings of a woman have not moved him; the triumph of meanness and baseness over probity and devotion have lit no spark of anger in his heart. He is a good man struggling with adversity, but adversity, I think, has proved too strong for his resolution. He would be English if he could, he would save us if we would let him, he would pour oil on the troubled waters if the roll of the ship had not made him so desperately sea-sick.

The case of Miss Douglas-Pennant has been admirably summarised by her solicitors in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* (August 3, 1925):

> When Miss Douglas-Pennant was dismissed from the post of commandant of the corps she was informed that she was unpopular with Mrs. Beatty and Miss Andrew, although she was very efficient. Notwithstanding this last but by no means least testimonial to her ability, the Air Ministry, prior to the opening of the inquiry by the Select Committee of the House of Lords, lodged a statement, called an answer, in which they alleged that the only reason for Miss Douglas-Pennant's dismissal was her incompetency in the opinion of Lord Weir, the then Secretary of State for Air. Lord Weir, however, expressly disclaimed the Air Ministry's statement, and declared that he had a high opinion of Miss Douglas-Pennant's ability, thus confirming, what in fact may now be taken as generally conceded, that our client's efficiency is beyond question or dispute.
>
> It was, however, admitted in the Air Ministry's statement that Lord Weir was influenced in ordering what was called not her "dismissal," but her "removal," by the opinions expressed by Sir Auckland Geddes as Minister of National Service, Lady Rhondda as head of the Women's Branch of the National Service, and Miss

Andrew. It transpired that Sir Auckland Geddes received his information (on which his opinions were based) from Lady Rhondda, and that Lady Rhondda received her information from a Miss Strachey (unknown to and by Miss Douglas-Pennant), who in her turn was set in motion by Mrs. Beatty and Miss Andrew, who were taken by Miss Strachey to Lady Rhondda. The whole case, therefore, seems to revolve on the information supplied by Mrs. Beatty and Miss Andrew. They were the fountain-head, so to speak, and supplied the current that set the wheels in motion. It is not irrelevant, therefore, to point out that they were both adjudged to be guilty of conduct amounting in war-time to mutiny, and it may be said, therefore, that the source was not untainted.

What was the information given by these mutinous ex-W.R.A.F. officers to Lady Rhondda, which Lady Rhondda passed on to Sir Auckland Geddes, and which Sir Auckland Geddes passed on to Lord Weir? There seems to be a veritable conspiracy of silence on the part of everybody concerned. Why? It is as inexplicable as the mysterious loss from Government files of the written report and the draft of the written report containing the purport of the information, or as the rejection by the Committee of the House of Lords of the evidence of a distinguished

naval officer like Sir Godfrey Paine (Miss Douglas-Pennant's chief, who was never even consulted or as much as informed about her dismissal) and other responsible witnesses in Miss Douglas-Pennant's favour. The result, and the obvious result, has been that Miss Douglas-Pennant has been made to suffer cruelly. She is described and treated to this day as a woman who has done something that is so dreadful that it cannot be disclosed. That a commandant can be dismissed from her post without any investigation (as was admittedly done in this case) must surely be fatal to the interests of the public service. In fact, if a junior officer (in this case Miss Andrew—a young girl who could sway a minister and be quoted in debates in the House of Lords) is to be at liberty to secure the dismissal of a superior officer on some secret story (which, so far as this case is concerned, has never been disclosed to the accused to this day), then good-bye to discipline or efficient administration.

An important principle is at stake; and that is why our client, apart from her own unmerited sufferings, has never ceased to press for redress.

There is clearly no evidence in this case that the chivalrous instincts of justice and fair play stand nearly so firm in our native char-

acter as Mr. Baldwin would have us believe. But there is here a very strong and unmistakable indication that a public servant who sets the national interest before the convenience of the bureaucracy will find neither defenders nor apologists in the world of officialdom, and will never obtain justice from the state.

I believe that the genius of Mr. Churchill, and his courage, have been broken by this close corporation, and that under its carefully organised dominance statesmanship has become little more than a secretarial function. And it surely needs no proof that under a system of democratic government the powers of bureaucracy, and its numbers, will always increase, extending their jurisdiction not only over the trade and commerce of the nation but over the rights and liberties of the individual subject.

It is certain, if the democratic principle persists, that trade and commerce will be brought with every year more and more hopelessly under the domination of clerks in Whitehall, and that the overhead charges of Government, far from diminishing, will tighten the screw of taxation until the national finances are disorganised beyond repair.[1]

[1] Sir John Corcoran, Director of the National Union of Manufacturers, said of the Government's new Factory Bill (November 8, 1926): "The Bill gives the Home Office very extensive powers of interference in the management and equipment of factories, and in a large number of cases it does not even indicate what is required, but reserves power to the Secretary of State (or the factory inspector) to lay down such conditions and make such orders as he pleases."

How bureaucracy tends to ruin the great achievements of individualism may be graphically seen in the case of our Indian Empire. So long as there was personal contact between the English gentleman and the Indian of any race or degree the peace and prosperity of that great empire marched hand in hand, with only slight disturbances. But as soon as bureaucracy despatched from these shores to administer the affairs of India a number of clerks whose fitness for the work had been tested only by a competitive examination, and kept them busy from morning to night in filling up forms and making reports which no one ever bothers to read, political unrest emerged, revolutionary propaganda ensued, rebellion raised its head, and even the loyal princes, from whose subjects we recruit our great Indian Army, began to feel that England's genius for government had gone.

Bureaucracy, by its very nature, is antipathetic to genius, courage, initiative, and every other virtue of individualism. It bears all the marks, and reveals all the characteristics, of Socialism. It is worse even than the despotism of an autocrat, for an autocrat may be a man of signal power and passionate patriotism, while bureaucracy can work smoothly only in the hands of mediocrity and dare not trust patriotism beyond the reach of a clerical mechanism.

CHAPTER VIII

NATIONAL UNITY

Many people are coming to believe that a succession of industrial crises, and a continuous fall in the volume of our exports, must culminate sooner or later in a grave if not a complete breakdown of our state mechanism.

Others, convinced that Democracy has now been tried in the balance and found wanting, and that its increasing gravitation towards the subversive doctrines of Communism is an immediate menace to everything sound and sacred in human life, aver their belief that to avoid catastrophe we must have recourse, like Italy, to an autocrat.

A great autocrat, if he could be found, might, it is true, deliver us from the worst mischiefs of Democracy. But it is not easy to think, nor is it wise to believe, that an autocrat could restore that which is so essential to the recovery of our good sense, namely, the spirit of national unity; and it is certain, however great the measure of his success, that he would leave behind him a problem as great as any which his genius had solved.

It is, I fear, the knowledge of these objections to autocracy which disposes numbers of

intelligent and patriotic people to bow rather tamely to that which they call the inevitable, and holds them from taking any active part in the politics of their time. They say that Democracy has made up its mind, and that nothing in the world can now prevent it from going its own road to perdition.

I venture to suggest that the choice before England is not the alternative of a Mussolini or Communism, and that it is possible to rid ourselves of the worst evils of the democratic principle without incurring any of the inconveniences and hazards of autocracy.

We voted ourselves into Democracy, and it is possible for us to vote ourselves out of it. We call ourselves a free people, we boast that we decide our own fate, and we prove it every General Election when we choose for ourselves who shall reign over us. Why, then, having proved to our cost that popular government is a failure, should we not vote ourselves out of its dangers? If it is possible for a chance party majority to vote us into Socialism and Communism, it must be possible for an awakened majority of the nation to vote us back into Individualism.

Before offering for discussion a method by which we could retain the values of Democracy and yet recover the sanities and vigours of Individualism, it may be useful to remind ourselves that the reforms of the last century usually extolled by Socialists as a proof of democratic wisdom were the work of an un-

reformed Parliament, and passed against the opposition of Gladstone and Bright; and also that the Utopia promised by the advanced spirits of Democracy was declared to lie just across the threshold of representative government.

Robert Owen, a principal forerunner of Socialism, came to London in 1813, bringing with him the manuscript of his *New View of Society,* and told Francis Place that "he possessed the means, and was resolved to produce a great change in the manners and habits of the whole people, from the most exalted to the most depressed."

Like every other reformer, "he found all our institutions at variance with the welfare and happiness of the people, and had discovered the true means of correcting all those errors which prevented them having the fullest enjoyment possible, and consequently, of being wise and happy. His project was simple, easy of adoption, and so plainly efficacious, that it must be embraced by every thinking man the moment he was made to understand it."

Francis Place, a genuine Radical, read Robert Owen's manuscript and came to the following conclusion concerning the man and his pamphlet:

> Never having read a metaphysical book, nor held a metaphysical conversation, nor having even heard of the disputes respecting free will and necessity, he had no clear conception of his subject, and his

views were obscure. Yet he has all along been preaching and publishing and projecting and predicting in the fullest conviction that he could command circumstances or create them, and place men above their control when necessary.

He never was able to explain these absurd notions, and therefore always required assent to them, telling those who were not willing to take his words on trust that it was their ignorance which prevented them from at once assenting to these self-evident propositions.

Twenty-three years later the still confident Socialist went so far as to name the day of his revolution.

> January 7, 1836, Mr. Owen this day has assured me, in the presence of more than thirty other persons, that within six months the whole state and condition of society in Great Britain will be changed, and all his views will be carried fully into effect.[1]

The reader will have no difficulty in recognising as the natural children of Robert Owen the Communists of the present day. Never having read a sane book of economics, nor held a conversation with educated men, nor having even heard of the disputes respect-

[1] Graham Wallas, *The Life of Francis Place*, pp. 63, 64.

ing the quantitative and qualitative theory of money, they have no clear conception of their subject, and yet are always preaching and publishing and projecting and predicting in the fullest confidence that they can command economic circumstances, create a new heaven on earth, and place men in a position where all will have plenty and no one will produce more than a minimum.

These Communists also, like Robert Owen, tell those who refuse to take the Russian short-cut to Paradise that it is their ignorance which prevents them from at once assenting to such self-evident propositions, and confidently affirm that next week, next month, or next year, the whole state and condition of society in Great Britain will resemble the blissful state and condition of Russia, which a Socialist lady, Odette Keun, has likened to a cesspool.[1]

It is important that those who carry on a propaganda of political sanity among the uneducated masses of Democracy should warn them that the quacks and impostors of economics, ever since they set out to exploit the working classes, have always promised immediate happiness, and that the less mendacious apostle of political reform has always been kicked down the stairs of trade unionism by the unconscionable agitator who can tell the greatest lie concerning his nostrum for the millennium.

Thus warned against putting its pathetic faith in the demagogues of Communism and

[1] Odette Keun, *My Adventures in Bolshevik Russia.*

the dreamers of Socialism, Democracy may be invited to consider whether it would not be wiser for it, wiser in its own interest, to follow the example of all the scientific professions in the world, and to place the greatest men of the time in charge of its political destinies.

This is to say, that Democracy should be encouraged to vote itself out of the disappointments and dangers of representative government, and to vote itself into the security and the reasonable confidence of a system which would assure for it the service of those best able to further its prosperity.

That system may be briefly summarised for the purpose of this book in the following manner. To the House of Commons would be *elected* representatives of some three or four hundred divisions of the British Isles, there to debate public questions, to suggest reforms, and to pass resolutions which would be sent to the Government for its consideration. To the Senate, which would take the place of the House of Lords, would be *nominated* by the chief trading bodies and learned societies of Great Britain some sixty or seventy representatives, who would themselves elect certain men from their number as Secretaries of State, these men forming themselves into a Committee of the Commonwealth which would constitute the Government of the country.

The Senate of such an Empire would of course provide places for the accredited representatives of the Dominions and India.

By this system, it will be seen, Democracy would rid itself of one of its most serious dangers, namely, the temptation offered to politicians and party organisers to outbid each other in seeking the favour of the multitude; and also it would secure for itself, not only a Government unsusceptible to public clamour and never in danger of political conspiracies, but a Government of the wisest and strongest men in the nation.

It is certain, I think, that a Senate composed of the leading persons in science, art, trade, and commerce, would elect from its members as Secretaries of State men who had already proved their ability as organisers and thinkers. Such a Senate, composed of leading physicians and surgeons, bankers and manufacturers, merchants and shippers, civil servants and ex-ambassadors, soldiers, sailors, and airmen, lawyers and schoolmasters, men of letters and ministers of religion, architects and painters, trade unionists and representatives of thrift societies, would never judge of a man's ability to think and act by mere glibness of utterance. It would choose, because its members had so been trained in their own departments, the men best able to serve the highest interests of the country, and it would form so powerful a body of criticism that no Secretary of State could continue to hold his office who either rushed into rash experiments or remained the complacent tool of bureaucracy.

Nor do I think a Senate of this character

would treat with indignity the discussions of the House of Commons. Freer than the Press, in these days of great newspaper trusts, and far more representative of public opinion than any party or trade organ, the House of Commons would bring into form and substance every valuable idea in the national mind, and constantly provide the Senate with information of a popular character. Moreover, the Senate might be called upon to submit its legislative proposals to the constructive criticism of the House of Commons, and the House of Commons in matters of the highest imperial or national importance, such as a declaration of war or any structural change in the constitution, might even be allowed the right to vote with the Senate as to whether the nation should not be consulted again.

It is very unlikely that a Senate composed of the wisest and ablest men in the nation would ever permit a Government to misuse its powers or to embark on any dangerous course clearly contrary to the good sense of the country; but in order that the nation should have the fullest confidence in such a system of government, it would be well that checks of this kind should be formulated.

Under this system, it should be observed, representative government would continue, and all that is useful in the democratic principle would be retained. For the Senate would represent the judgment of the wisest people in the country, and the House of Commons

would represent public opinion. The Government would be constantly subjected to criticism, and instructed criticism, and would never feel itself endowed with autocratic powers. But it would not be subjected to the corruption of party organisations, it would not be influenced by gusts of political passion, and it would not feel itself to exist hazardously on the caprices of an ignorant mob. For a period of, let us say, five years, such a Government would have an uninterrupted opportunity of organising the British Empire, of increasing the material prosperity of the British people, of furthering the physical health and social happiness of the nation, and restoring to the country something of the delight and charm which the vulgarities of the last hundred years have so cruelly misused.

If it be argued that such a system of government, however desirable, would never be accepted by Democracy, it may be answered that to vote oneself into sanity does not call for so much courage as to vote oneself into insanity. Under the fallacious oratory of democratic orators, who promised the moon and believed that the millennium was at hand, the nation entrusted its destinies to the votes of the uneducated and irresponsible masses. Under the influence of rational persuasion, the nation, bitterly disappointed by its reformers and sorely suffering from its past mistakes, might be brought to try a system of government which commends itself both to reason and to common sense.

"It is doubtful," says Mr. Trevelyan, on page 510 of his *History of England,* "whether nobles and squires would ever have consented to concentrate such power in the Lower House, if they had thought of it strictly as a popular body. But they thought of it as a house of gentlemen, . . . to which the highest interests of the country could safely be committed."

The real question to decide is whether the present representatives of Conservatism have the necessary qualities to set out on a political crusade that demands great courage and vigorous intelligence. Among the older men, shuffling from one compromise to another, and stumbling from this crisis to the next, one could hardly expect to find a spark of enthusiasm for so arduous a campaign; but among the younger men, to whom the ancient individualism of their race is still something of a religion, and who have the clear vision of youth to see that dangerous Socialism must inevitably end in hated Communism, one need not feel it unreasonable to suppose that some at least would gratefully respond to a genuine call for real political battle.

Socialists have so accustomed us to think that the sturdy and determined masses of the working classes are on one side of the battle and the guilty and shivering idle rich on the other, that we are apt to forget the vastly different realities of the national situation. On the one side of the battle is disappointment, dejection, bitterness, ignorance, bewilderment,

and suffering, cleverly organised by exploiting politicians, and on the other intelligence, energy, ambition, patriotism, imperialism, and traditionalism, *representative of all classes in the nation from the highest to the lowest,* but fluctuating at the present time between a Conservatism afraid of its own principles and a Liberalism torn to rags by a miserable feud of personalities.

Let a few men of courage and vision, gifted with the fighting instinct and the creative spirit, appeal to all classes in the state for national unity, let them organise as one body those who love their country and believe in the destiny of the English race, and it would soon be seen that there is an overwhelming majority of the nation against anything in the nature of Communism. And when once the scattered, divided, and perplexed forces of intelligence and loyalty had been rallied into one grand army of English common sense by men as truly inspired with English ideas as the Great Commoner, it would not be difficult to proceed from the destruction of traitorous Communism to the creation of some such rational form of government as I have suggested above.

It is the most pathetic and inexplicable characteristic of the present time that while Communists, with only the Russian tragedy to inspire them, should be so full of confidence and so spoiling for a fight, the forces of loyalty and intelligence, with their own most sacred traditions in peril and the shining glory of the

British Empire to inspire them, should go so dismally about their work, as if they had no faith in their ideals and no confidence in themselves, more like men with ropes round their necks than leaders and captains of a great imperial race.

"That two million peasants," writes Mr. G. M. Trevelyan, "scarcely emerging from serfdom, together with a few score thousand Huguenot refugees, inhabiting certain sandy regions of North Germany, should have enabled their King to defy for seven years the onslaught of Austria, Russia, and France, may seem a miracle."[1] That miracle was a man who believed in the power of right ideas to overcome wrong ideas, and who saved Europe and the civilisation of man's soul because he succumbed neither to the enervations of vice nor to the illusions of political sentimentalism.

"I define him to myself," says Carlyle, "as hitherto the Last of the Kings;—when the Next will be, is a very long question! But it seems to me as if Nations, probably all Nations, by and by, in their despair,—blinded, swallowed, like Jonah, in such a whale's-belly of things brutish, waste, abominable (for is not Anarchy, or the Rule of what is Baser over what is Nobler the one life's misery worth complaining of, and, in fact, the abomination of abominations, springing from and producing all others whatsoever?)—as if the Nations universally, and

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 543.

England too if it holds on, may more and more bethink themselves of such a Man and his Function and Performance, with feelings far other than are possible at present."

The time for bethinking ourselves of such a man as Frederic the Great has now at last come, and we whose history is rich in such men, and who owe our vast dominion in the world entirely to individual men of a like stature, need copy neither a Prussian nor an Italian model of manhood, nor should we idly sigh for destiny to present us with an autocrat. Aware at last that an accident at the polls, a mere continuance of a split vote between Conservative and Liberal, may place everything noble and beautiful in our English life, everything sacred and precious, in the hands of Socialists and Communists for a period of five years; aware of this immediate and not fanciful danger to our glory and our power, surely we shall confess ourselves as entirely unfit to hold our place at the head of the nations if we do not at once move vigorously in the direction of political sanity, and sacrifice our leisure and our comfort in order to achieve national unity.

It was Frederic the Great himself who said, concerning William Pitt, England was long in labour, till at last she brought forth a man.

CHAPTER IX

A GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Lest a careless reader should conclude, or an enemy without a conscience declare, that I have written this book with the purpose of holding up the English working classes to scorn, I will here make it unmistakably manifest that the term which I have chosen for my title, "The Howling Mob," is intended to apply to all classes in the community, and is meant to designate every man and woman in the nation, of whatever class or condition, who in their behaviour and thinking set at naught those moral, intellectual, and spiritual standards which have hitherto marched unquestioned at the head of the British people.

It is far easier for men who value those standards and attempt in their own lives to hold them in honour, to enter into conversation with an almost unlettered peasant who has studied nature and loves the traditional simplicities of his rustic life, than to feel that he is indeed talking to an Englishman when he encounters a man of wealth or position who has never read with delight any of the authentic English poets, never followed the great chronicle of English history with affectionate

pride, nor intelligently taken into his own character any of those creative impulses in the sphere of conduct and manners which come from a grateful study of the lives of the noblest Englishmen.

The mob which threatens everything sacred and beautiful in English life is certainly not found only in the depressing quarters of a great city, but at its very centre: not only in the lowliest and most struggling ranks of the nation, but also at its very head and front; indeed, it may be argued that the example set by the ignorant rich and the ignoble leisured, more than any other influence of the modern world, is tending to materialise the lower orders and to corrupt the healthful virtues of the poor.

This unworthy, undignified, and most dangerous state of things must continue, in my opinion, if the democratic principle is accepted as the last word in political wisdom. My whole argument is that intelligence cannot be manufactured, cannot be purchased, cannot be voted; and that when education is pressed into the service of the state it succeeds in producing only a low and dull uniformity, while it destroys nearly all the richness and rareness of original character.

I argue that the democratic principle lowers all standards in a nation, both moral and intellectual; that it multiplies the powers of an unimaginative bureaucracy; that it hampers the man of exceptional qualities; that it breeds

in statesmen a cowardly prudence and in merchants a parasitical cupidity; that it makes the low man at once a political power and an object of commercial exploitation; that it robs the individual citizen of his rightful freedom; and that its evolution, from the very dawn of its first activities up to this dark hour of our present nightmare, has been away from all the ancient and formative liberties of individualism and definitely towards the tyranny and slavery of the Communistic ideal.

This charge against the theory and practice of Democracy is the main contention of my book, which seeks chiefly to rouse those people who sincerely love their country and are earnestly interested in the higher values of civilisation to consider whether the democratic principle is not a vain superstition. But I have ventured, lest the charge should be brought against me of merely criticising a state of things for which I have no remedy, to suggest a line of advance which, whatever may be urged against it, makes no absurd demand for an autocrat and calls for no dangerous *coup d'état* on the part of those who feel acutely the danger of our present plight.

Whether in its particulars my suggestion is good or bad, I venture to maintain that its principle is beyond criticism. For the soul of that suggestion is simply this, that proved intelligence is the rightful lord of a nation's destinies, and that national unity, without

which the most powerful empires break asunder, is only to be secured when a people is convinced that it is being led by the highest wisdom in the state. Loyalty is a sentiment which can be strong and creative only when conscious that it is entirely justified.

How we are to secure that this highest wisdom should reign over us and call back into our national life the unifying principle of an affectionate loyalty, is a matter for argument; but if we can secure in the nation a general acceptance of the idea that proved intelligence is a truer captain of man's destinies than passion, caprice, or talkative ignorance, we shall at any rate have moved an appreciable distance from the verge of danger and set our faces in a direction which at least promises us a reasonable hope for the future.

APPENDIX I

MR. A. J. COOK

When the ruinous coal stoppage had ended, Mr. Cook went to Moscow, and Mr. Baldwin, in the House of Commons, at last spoke the truth about him. The Prime Minister, after speaking of the efforts made for peace, said, according to *The Times* of December 9, 1926:

> One of the difficulties that we have all been up against during the whole of this strife is that while the leaders of the Labour Party were making those efforts, the secretary of the Miners' Federation for a year before had had no such views in his mind. He had been running up and down the country, to use as far as I can his own words—I have shorthand evidence for all I propose to say—" For twelve months I have been raising hell " (laughter); he told us—whatever that may mean—that he was one of the Big Five. My limbs were to tremble. He was out for revolution. He was a humble disciple of Lenin. He was openly fomenting bad feeling both before July 1925 and right away on, and has, I believe, in retrospect prolonged the

struggle and brought it to an ignominious disaster. (Hear, hear.)

The Prime Minister, aware that Mr. Cook was a humble disciple of Lenin (who said of those disciples that out of every hundred of them sixty were fools, thirty-nine criminals, and one a Communist), nevertheless treated with him throughout the protracted and useless negotiations as if he were an ordinary trade-union official whose sole purpose was to secure the prosperity of the mining industry.

In the same issue of *The Times*, the Prime Minister might have read the two following letters:

> Sir,—To the plain man modern politics are in some respects unintelligible. You publish this morning an account of Mr. A. J. Cook's speeches in Moscow. On his own showing he is a revolutionary and determined to organise another strike. Sentence of permanent exile would have the support of the whole country, except for his 12,000 Communists. To the plain man the thing seems obvious. What is the difficulty? If Mr. A. J. Cook is allowed to return, in what sense is the Government carrying out the wishes of the electorate?
>
> Yours faithfully,
> W. H. Allen Whitworth.
>
> Lancing College, Shoreham, Sussex,
> *December* 7, 1926.

SIR,—In *The Times* to-day there is a report of Mr. Cook's speech yesterday in Moscow to the "Red" Trade Union Congress. He is stated to have said that "a vast majority of the rank and file in England are ready to fight, not only for wages, but for revolution. But we want your help." Surely, Sir, if a subject of the King goes to a foreign power and asks its help to overthrow the Monarchy, the Government and the Constitution of this country, he should be attainted for treason and outlawed from his own country. It is unthinkable that after such a public utterance, in the midst of the bitterest enemies of the British Empire, Mr. Cook should be permitted to land on our shores as a peaceful, law-abiding citizen. Such an outrage would be resented by every decent man and woman in this country.

Yours faithfully,
K. E. DAMAN.

LONDON,
December 7, 1926.

Up to the time of sending this book to the printers no signs have been shown that the Government, having known Mr. Cook's real intention all through the coal dispute, are minded to act even now as if the implications of that knowledge had any bearing on the future prosperity of the country. Such is government by Democracy.

APPENDIX II

THE DOUGLAS-PENNANT CASE

The following letter from a Chaplain to the King, addressed to the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian,* puts the point I have endeavoured to make in a very admirable manner.

> Sir,—I am sorry to be obliged to ask once more for some space in your correspondence columns to discuss the case of Miss Douglas-Pennant, but I have been moving about a good deal lately and have discussed the case for reopening the matter with a good many people, and I find that there are three reasons which are very commonly offered why the new inquiry which is asked for should not be granted. I should like to examine them.
>
> 1. *An inquiry has already been held.* Will those of your readers who are inclined to advance this argument spend a few pence and get the official report of the House of Lords inquiry? When I began reading it I was, for a short time, impressed by the strong case which seemed to be building up against Miss Violet Douglas-Pennant. But as I read on I

could not help noticing that while the report afforded a great deal of interesting information on a great number of topics, and arrived at some striking findings in a number of different points, there was ONE subject upon which it supplied NO information and about which it arrived at no finding, and THAT SUBJECT WAS WHY MISS DOUGLAS-PENNANT HAD BEEN DISMISSED AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. When I had grasped this really extraordinary fact I re-read the report and was impressed by the way in which everything that can possibly tell against Miss Douglas-Pennant is stressed, emphasised, and exaggerated, while everything that could tell against her accusers, no matter whether it is gross breaches of discipline, mutiny in war-time, deliberate falsehood in official letters, or anything else, is glossed over and excused. No one should argue that a fair inquiry has been held till he has read the official report. And no one, I should think, will read it without a feeling of profound discomfort.

Nor is it accurate to say that an inquiry has been held. Not one but two inquiries have been held, and the report of one, the Harmsworth Inquiry, has, definite promises notwithstanding, never been published. Why? There is but one possible reason. It was in Miss Douglas-Pennant's favour.

2. *To reopen the case would cost too much.* There is no person more in favour of economy than I am, but if it is money

cost of which people are speaking I must say that I think a million pounds would be well spent if it established the fact that no one, man or woman, can be punished in England without being allowed to know what the charge is and having an opportunity for defence. But I fear that at the back of many people's minds there is another thought—namely, that too many undesirable secrets will come to light. "It is expedient that this woman die for the people, and that the whole officialdom of the nation perish not." But I should not, I hope, have agreed with the parallel sentiment nineteen hundred years ago, and I cannot agree with it now. Why will not the Government (and all members of past Governments, Conservative, Liberal, and Labour, which are smirched in this matter) understand the growing sense of uneasiness and distrust which their refusal to ventilate this matter is producing in the public mind?

3. *There were plenty of other people who suffered injustice in war-time. Why can't Miss Douglas-Pennant keep quiet, as other people have had to do?* If it is true that many people have suffered injustice, then it is certain that when next the nation is passing through any great crisis, there will again be a temptation to be careless of human rights. The best way of preventing, or at any rate minimising, the natural tendency of hurried

officialdom to ride roughshod over human rights is to convince them that, when this "tyranny is overpast," a day of reckoning comes. Justice to Miss Douglas-Pennant is a great thing. She would be the first, I am sure, to admit that it is an even greater thing to establish the fact that INJUSTICE CANNOT BE DONE WITH IMPUNITY.

The case must be reopened. Silence, in the face of such grave charges as are accumulating against Miss Douglas-Pennant's opponents, is a policy which cannot be carried on indefinitely. The sooner the matter is reopened the better for everyone.—Yours, etc.,

PETER GREEN, *Canon of Manchester (Chaplain to H.M. the King).*

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